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MESOPOTAMIA : THE LAST PHASE

[Photo. Maull & Fox

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR STANLEY MAUDE,
K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

MESOPOTAMIA
THE LAST PHASE

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. BURNE, D.S.O.

Author of
THE LIAO-YANG CAMPAIGN
HISTORY OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY MESS, WOOLWICH
TALKS ON LEADERSHIP
ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS
AND TWO PHOTOGRAPHS

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To
R. *V*. *H*. *B*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

THE Mesopotamian campaign, viewed as a whole may be compared to a flower—a tulip for choice, of which the willowy stalk represents the line of our advance up the Tigris, past Qurna, Amara and Kut, to Baghdad. At Baghdad the stalk blossoms and bursts into flower, and if the reader will pencil the area covered by subsequent operations on a map he will see that its outline approximates almost exactly to that of a tulip, one petal embracing the Diyala, one the Euphrates, while the central petal encloses the Tigris. To complete the simile, the offshoots up the Karun river to the right and up the Euphrates to Nasiriya to the left will represent two leaves. It is the flower portion of the campaign that will be dealt with in this book—the last phase of the war—when our troops were no longer glued to the line of the River Tigris, when not only the area of operations but the range of possibilities blossomed and broadened out, thereby adding enormously to the interest and value of the campaign from the point of view of the military student. Problems of interior lines and exterior lines, and problems of time and space, which owing to the nature of the case were foreign to the early part of the campaign, now abound. In fact, the extent to which this campaign has been neglected by military students and historians is remarkable.

In this book I have set myself two chief aims. The first is to present, within a small compass, an accurate account of the main events of this little-known campaign. The second aim is to bring out some of the main lessons that the campaign teaches us.

As to the first aim. Complete and literal accuracy in describing any military operation is almost impossible to obtain. Even the accounts of eyewitnesses vary; memories fail; the very eyes deceive. Did not the Duke of Wellington afterwards declare that the British artillery "ran away" at the battle of Waterloo, whereas it transpired that all he had seen was some empty limbers going to the rear? I have, however, been at pains to achieve as great accuracy as possible, and I hope that any reader who discovers any errors of fact will point them out to me.

As to my second aim. Such an attempt is bound to imply criticism at times. It would be absurd to maintain that none of our generals ever made mistakes; even Napoleon was frequently at fault. It is easy to be wise after the event; but if in the light of that event one points out that different action would have produced better results, it does not imply that, on the information at his disposal at the time, the commander was not justified in his action. In any case this book is concerned with lessons, not with personalities. Partly for this reason and partly for the sake of simplicity, names of persons and units (also the quotation of numbers) have been reduced to a minimum.

Further to ensure simplicity, all references to infantry brigades (sometimes their numbers only are given) must be taken to include all attached troops, including artillery, that the sense demands. For the same reason artillery units are seldom specified by name (the Appendix gives particulars concerning them), nor are the numbers of guns present at an engagement usually given, unless there is exceptional disparity in numbers to the rest of the force or to those of the enemy.

Names are spelt as in the *Official History*, and all places mentioned are shown on the map or described. I am indebted to H.M. Stationery Office for permission to reproduce Maps A and B. The position of troops on the Sketch Maps must be regarded as approximate only, though I have consulted all available sources in order to make them as accurate as possible. In all the maps British-Indian troops are coloured red and Turkish troops green.

In addition to the help I have received from the books mentioned in the following pages, I have to thank the many friends who have answered my questions or placed documents dealing with the campaign at my disposal, and in particular to my brother Richard for reading the manuscript and for other help.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A few readers have responded to my request to point out any errors of fact, and their information, for which I am grateful, has been incorporated in this Edition.

I have not found it necessary to modify any of the opinions or criticisms expressed in the first Edition.

A. H. B.

London, February, 1938.

WHAT TO READ

THE historian naturally seeks out original sources: diaries, letters and personal communications. The average reader, to whom this book is directed, must be content with published works, to which these notes will accordingly be confined. There is no point in attempting a complete bibliography of books which refer to the campaign. In any case its literature is singularly meagre. Just as the average popular history of the Indian Mutiny tends to fade out after the relief of Lucknow, though the most interesting campaign (that in Central India) was yet to be fought, so the average short history of the Mesopotamian campaign slurs over its last and in many ways most interesting phase.

Of the books really essential to students, our *Official History* must naturally be placed first. If occasionally and in small points I have ventured to differ from it, this is not to imply that I am not immensely indebted to the work, and that I have not a profound admiration for the thoroughness and accuracy of the book as a whole. The student cannot do better than read it first as a foundation for his further studies. If he desires to preface it with a short outline, I recommend Major R. Evans's *A Brief Outline of the Campaign in Mesopotamia.* What a pity this admirable book is not longer! This might be supplemented by the relevant chapters in *A Popular History of the Great War*, edited by Sir J. Hammerton. The author is anonymous, but evidently well informed. Next we come to the biographies of the two commanders, Sir Stanley Maude and Sir William Marshall. That of the former is written by General Callwell. That of the latter is an autobiography, *Memories of Four Fronts.* Both are disappointingly short in their reference to this campaign, but both bring out the motives, intentions and, in the case of the former, the character of the two generals. In the next group we can place books written by eyewitnesses. Here also the number is few. Easily the most important for our purpose is *In the Clouds above Baghdad*, by Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Tennant, who was in command of the Air Force up to the battle of Khan Baghdadi. Being in close

and almost daily touch with the commander-in-chief, the author is able to give us an intimate portrait of him. His narrative is well informed and he supplies some useful maps. Another eye-witness is Sir Arnold Wilson, who in the later stages succeeded Sir Percy Cox as Commissioner. His occasional criticisms are extremely sound and shrewd in the two books, *Loyalties* and *A Clash of Loyalties*. A third important eyewitness was the accredited Press Correspondent, Edmund Candler, whose *The Long Road to Baghdad* contains some excellent pen pictures of the operations. Unfortunately, he left before the end. The next group is a large one—Regimental Histories. The only ones that need be specified by name are those of the 13th Hussars by Sir Mortimer Durand, for Daur, Tikrit, Tuz and Sharqat; that of the Leicesters for Istabulat; and that of The Black Watch for Mushahida and Istabulat. The final group consists of magazine articles. There are a few of these scattered about the pages of *The Cavalry Journal* (particularly useful for Sharqat), the *Army Quarterly* and the *Journal of the R.U.S.I.*

On the Turkish side there is nothing published, absolutely nothing. It is amazing but literally true. The Turkish General Staff state that their Official History is in process of compilation, but it seems likely that its publication is still distant. Captain Amin Bey's *Baghdad and the Story of its Last Fall* (unpublished in English) stops short at the capture of Baghdad. Colonel Amir Bey's *Yilderim* (also unpublished in English) deals only with the campaign so far as it affects the Turkish Seventh Army, which is hardly at all. We are, in fact, reduced to a single French book, *La Guerre Turque dans la Guerre Mondiale*, by Commandant Larcher. This work, though admirable in its way, does not devote much space to our campaign, but it is useful for cross-checking our own estimates of Turkish numbers and resources. There is, in fact, no campaign in the whole course of the World War of which the published accounts emanate so exclusively from one side. We would give a good deal to have the Memoirs of General Ali Ihsan. Perhaps some day he will be disposed to give them to the world!

All the above books can be consulted free of charge in the excellent library of the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth.

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CHAPTER I

Introductory.

MESOPOTAMIA is a broad, arid waste of sandy desert, and does not at the first blush seem "worth the bones of a single Pomeranian." Nor was it worth fighting for—ever since its ancient civilisation had been destroyed by Ghengiz Khan in 1258—until the present century. But early in this century two important events occurred. A German company (backed by the Deutsche Bank) started to construct a railway that was designed to link up Berlin with the Persian Gulf, and oil was discovered on the Karun river, one hundred miles north of the Persian Gulf. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed, and this company in 1914 supplied 75 per cent. of oil used by the British Navy. Though the wells and pipe-lines were in Persia, they were so near the border, and Persia was in such a powerless state, that they seemed likely to fall an easy prey to the Turks unless defended by us. Thus it happened that on November 6th, 1914, a naval sloop and a few marines attacked and captured the fort of Fao on the mouth of the Shatt-al-arab. From this modest beginning sprang an expeditionary force that eventually reached a ration strength of over a quarter of a million men.

The first reinforcement to arrive was the 6th Indian Division, which captured Basra on November 22nd. Its mission was to protect our oil interests, and for this purpose a force was sent to the Karun river, without any opposition on the part of the Persians.

Early in 1915 the approach of Turkish reinforcements necessitated the sending of a second division and a cavalry brigade from India, and Sir John Nixon was placed in command of the force. The Indian Government, who were solely responsible for conducting the campaign, gave him the following missions :—

(1) To control the Basra vilayet (extending nearly to Kut).

(2) To secure the safety of the oil-fields.

(3) To submit a plan for an eventual advance to Baghdad.

These orders betokened two developments of the original plan. First, territorial control was placed before the defence of the oil interests; second, the possibility of an advance to Baghdad was hinted at.

On April 12th the hard-fought battle of Shaiba (near Qurna) resulted in the Turks retreating up the Euphrates to Nasiriya, which place was captured on July 24th. Meanwhile the remainder of the 6th Division, under General Townshend, had captured Amara on June 3rd. In order to prevent the Turks from transferring troops between Tigris and Euphrates by way of the Shatt-al-Hai (the old course of the Tigris between Kut and Nasiriya), Townshend was ordered to continue his advance to Kut. The battle of Es Sinn on September 27th led to the capture of the town and to the pursuit of the enemy nearly half-way to Baghdad.

Everything seemed to be going well. Nothing could stand against the all-conquering 6th Division, and Mesopotamia was the brightest spot on the whole far-flung battle front. Baghdad naturally appeared as a glittering prize, and after prolonged exchange of notes between Mesopotamia, Simla and Whitehall it was decided to push on to the City of the Caliphs.

Townshend continued his advance, and on November 22nd attacked the Turkish position at Ctesiphon, twenty miles from Baghdad. But unbeknown to him, the enemy had been reinforced by two first-class Anatolian divisions (the Turks previously encountered had been of poorer quality, intermixed with Arabs). In a very hard fight the Turkish first line was captured, but Townshend halted for some days, in a state of indecision. Then both sides simultaneously decided on retirement, and the Turks actually commenced theirs. But when they discovered their mistake they retraced their steps and pursued the British force back to Kut. At first the retirement was conducted leisurely, but after a brush with the Turks at Umm-at-Tubul it was continued day and night. The army reached Kut in an exhausted state. Immediate reinforcements were not available, and Nixon left the decision whether to stand at Kut and accept a siege to Townshend. The latter decided in favour of a siege, declaring, "I will hold Kut as I held Chitral."

But he soon started asking for relief. Owing to faulty and varying estimates of how long the town could hold out, relief operations were made hurriedly and piecemeal. Each effort at relief in turn therefore broke down, the bad weather conditions

being largely responsible. In spite of valiant but costly efforts, Kut fell on April 19th, and nearly 10,000 prisoners fell into Turkish hands—our greatest disaster since the surrender of Yorktown, nearly 150 years before.

At this dark stage in the campaign, with our army defeated, dejected and dispirited, Major-General Stanley Maude, the junior but one of the divisional commanders, was appointed to the command of the Tigris force, and soon afterwards to the supreme command in Mesopotamia. He was a very *deus ex machina*, as his troops soon came to realize. Throughout the summer he steadily nursed them back to a state of moral and physical health, much as Pétain did in the case of the French army in 1917. The War Office took over the conduct of the campaign, and having implicit faith in the new commander, they denied none of his requests. Like another great commander, Allenby, he refused to move till he was satisfied that his army was in all respects fit and ready for the task in front of it, with the result that by the autumn it was for the first time in the campaign adequately supplied with stores, transport and ammunition on a scale approximating to that on other fronts. No longer was Mesopotamia " nobody's child."

Throughout this period of waiting the army remained in the position that it had so dearly won, a few miles short of the town of Kut, with the Turks equally passive between them and their objective. By the month of December Maude considered himself strong enough to strike. He had won over Sir William Robertson, the C.I.G.S., though the latter had actually been in favour of falling back to Amara—he was ever unsympathetic to " sideshows."

Starting with a methodical series of " nibbles " on the west bank which extended through December and January, Maude at last reached a position from which he could spring. On February 22nd, by a brilliant piece of work, he crossed the river in rear of Kut, despite the most obstinate resistance on the part of the splendid Turkish troops. The enemy on the other bank were accordingly forced to fall back hurriedly ; but thanks to their speed and to our slowness, they extricated themselves from the net spread for them. Their retreat was harried, not by the cavalry, but by the naval flotilla.

At that same Aziziya where Townshend had received orders to push on to Baghdad, an exchange of telegrams with Whitehall resulted in Maude also receiving the order to take Baghdad—an order that he welcomed and had been steadily working for.

The advance was resumed, and after a sharp fight at the crossing of the River Diyala, Baghdad was entered on March 11th.

The achievement had been a remarkable one, and represented the first really solid success we had won during the war. But owing to our great numerical superiority (about four to one) we must in fairness admit that great credit is reflected on the Turks for holding us up for so long and for getting their army away at all.

Baghdad having fallen, our policy had to be reviewed. This affords a good opportunity for a general survey of the situation—which will require a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER II

The Situation on the Fall of Baghdad.

(*Maps A and B.*)

JUST as the traveller crossing a series of transverse ridges has in front of him a constantly changing skyline with fresh prospects, made enchanting by the distance, so did a fresh prospect—and a fair one—now meet the gaze of the strategians poring over their maps in Whitehall, Simla and Baghdad. For a new factor had arisen, a new protagonist had appeared upon the scene. While Maude had been pushing his way to Baghdad, a Russian force under General Baratoff had been steadily advancing through Southern Persia, driving before it the Turkish XIII Corps. It was now nearing Karind (120 miles north-east of Baghdad).

A second Russian army, directed upon Mosul, was for the moment lying snowbound near Bane, while the main Russian Caucasian army was also snowbound in the area Trebizond–Bitlis. Both these armies hoped to resume their advance in about a month's time. On the day after the fall of Baghdad the Czar of Russia had also fallen, but the revolution was not expected to impair the efficiency of the Russian army—rather the reverse.

The Grand Duke Nicholas had ordered Baratoff to co-operate with the British against the Turkish XIII Corps. The prospect seemed a particularly fair one.

Robertson's instructions to Maude had been simply "to establish British influence in the Baghdad vilayet"—that is, half-way to Mosul. A second objective was now added: "to assist the Russians in establishing themselves firmly on the Tigris." The point of junction between the two armies seemed likely to be in the vicinity of Khaniqin, the junction of the Kirkuk–Kermanshah road with the Baghdad road. Robertson further suggested: "You might be able to cut off the retreat of at least a part of the Turkish 2nd Division."

But three preliminary steps were immediately necessary:—

(1) To establish order in Baghdad.

(2) To prevent the flooding of the Euphrates at Falluja,

and, if possible, to cut off the Turks retreating up the Euphrates.

(3) To drive the XVIII Corps beyond the reach of the city.

As to these steps : the first was carried out without difficulty ; political officers were appointed to administer the city, under military law, and a large garrison was maintained in it until the end of the campaign.

As to the second, owing to the fact that the Euphrates is a few feet higher than the Tigris and the country between the two rivers at Baghdad is flat, it followed that by diverting the former river all the country on the west bank of the Tigris at Baghdad could be flooded. This danger was narrowly averted by setting the troops to dig a bund along the railway line.

As for cutting off the Euphrates force at Falluja, shortage of transport made it impossible to undertake this until the third step had been taken—namely, to drive the XVIII Corps beyond reach of the city. For if the enemy played their cards skilfully our position at Baghdad might easily be compromised.

A glance at the map will show that Baghdad might be approached by no less than four routes : down the Euphrates, down the Tigris west bank, down the Tigris east bank, or down the Diyala. In other words, the Turks held a position of exterior lines with regard to Baghdad. Such a position confers a great advantage if one can deny the opponent *time and space to manœuvre.* Until the Turks were driven farther from the city, therefore, the British were in a false position. Maude of course realized this, and decided that the area for about two days' march round Baghdad must be cleared of the enemy, and our own troops established on an arc whose minimum dimensions must accordingly be Falluja–Sumaika–Diltawa. He would then be in a favourable posture to play off interior lines against his opponent ; in fact, the convergence of the roads upon Baghdad, so far from being a source of danger, would be a positive advantage.

At the same time the convergence of three waterways upon his focal point had its disadvantages. To maintain lateral communication between his detachments, these rivers must be bridged ; and it soon became apparent that numerous canals, not marked on the very inadequate maps, must also be bridged. A great strain was bound to fall upon his bridging resources. Yet the very multitude of watercourses had their compensation.

No longer was it necessary to hug the line of the Tigris, like a truck tied to its rail. The watercourses conveyed a certain freedom of manœuvre to which Force " D," as the army was known, had up till now been a stranger.

It is now time to give a summary of the dispositions of the rival armies immediately after the fall of Baghdad. The numbers credited to the Turks are based on our computation at the time, but they may be taken as substantially correct, though in some cases higher than the figures given by the Turks themselves.

THE TURKS.

The Turkish army in Mesopotamia was the Sixth, commanded by Halil Pasha, the capturer of Kut. He had succeeded Field-Marshal von der Goltz after the surrender of Kut, and was showing himself a capable commander. He was a shrewd, young, up-to-date man of the world, and full of vigour. His headquarters were at Samarra. His army consisted of two corps (not including a force opposed to the Russians at Bane), the XIII and XVIII.

The XIII Corps was commanded by Ali Ihsan, of whom more hereafter. It consisted of the 2nd and 6th Divisions. The 2nd Division was in touch with the Russians, and retired from Kermanshah on the day that Baghdad fell. The 6th Division was about Khaniqin, with a detachment moving south to join the 14th Division, which was falling back up the Diyala, with the intention of joining the XIII Corps.

The XVIII Corps was commanded by Kara Bekr Bey, who had only recently been placed in command. The bulk of his corps was concentrated on the west bank of the Tigris about Mushahida.

The XIII Corps consisted of about 800 sabres, 7,500 rifles, 1,500 levies, and 50 guns.

The XVIII Corps consisted of about 5,000 rifles and 26 guns. Reinforcements were believed to be on their way.

The Euphrates detachment consisted of about 3,000 men, according to our records, though Larcher puts it at only 800 Turkish rifles and 1,500 Arabs.* It was reported to be about forty miles south of Baghdad, retreating hurriedly up the river.

The Turkish forces thus totalled about 16,000 rifles and sabres and 80 guns.

* *La Guerre Turque dans la Guerre Mondiale*, p. 347.

THE TIGRIS FRONT.

The force at General Maude's disposal consisted of one cavalry and four infantry divisions. The I Corps consisted of the 3rd and 7th Divisions, commanded by General Cobbe. The III Corps consisted of the 13th and 14th Divisions, under the command of General Marshall. All the divisions were Indian except the 13th. This division had been taken to Gallipoli by General Maude, and brought on by him to Mesopotamia after the evacuation. The Indian Divisions were for the most part improvised. The cavalry consisted of the 6th and 7th Brigades. The R.F.C. consisted of one squadron. Its machines were sadly in need of repair, having no covered aerodrome and being 500 miles from their base.

The army totalled about 45,000 rifles and sabres. Fuller details as to its composition are given in the Appendix.

The Turks had a number of Arab levies, who were, however, of little fighting value. We, on the other hand, made practically no use of Arabs, as they proved too unreliable.

It will be seen from the above that we possessed a great numerical superiority over the enemy (about three to one), without counting the Russians. The problem confronting General Maude was how to make use of this advantage. Was such a large force justified in the country now that our chief objective had been gained? There seemed to be two possible courses: (1) To advance still farther and complete the destruction of the enemy in conjunction with the Russians; (2) to adopt a quiescent attitude and reduce our strength. The invasion of Palestine was about to commence. Could not our surplus troops be better employed there? The latter course seemed an attractive one. Unfortunately, to adopt it would be to incur a great risk. While we held the advantage of tactical interior lines, the Turks held the wider *strategic* interior lines. From their central nodal point of Aleppo they could concentrate against either Palestine or Mesopotamia more quickly than we could transfer troops to the threatened sphere. The quickest route from Baghdad to Gaza might well be through India. In any case it was extremely probable that the Turks would make a great effort to retake the sacred city of Baghdad. We could not afford to run the risk of losing it again. Its capture had helped to wipe out, or at any rate veil, the memory of Kut. We could not run the slightest risk of a second Kut. Therefore our troops must remain in preponderating numbers, even though

the enemy should gibe about the Mesopotamian "internment camp." This was one of Kut's unfortunate legacies.

This brings us back to the first course. If we had to keep a large force still in the country, could we not make use of it by advancing still farther? But there were difficulties here also, the chief of them being the lines of communications. Already these were 500 miles long, and throughout that distance there was ever present the danger of interference from disaffected Arabs. A large force was already tied up in guarding the lines of communications. The situation was, however, improving. Starting from the front, a stretch of the Baghdad Railway had been completed between Samarra and Baghdad before the war, but most of the rolling stock on this section was still in the hands of the Turks. A line was being constructed from Baghdad to Kut, which should be finished before May. From Kut to Amara the river alone was depended on. From Amara to Qurna the broad gauge should be ready by the end of April; while from there to Basra a narrow-gauge line was already in operation. To continue our review: above Samarra the Tigris was unnavigable, whilst above Falluja the only traffic possible was downstream in flat-bottomed boats. In fact, it was calculated that the journey from Jerablus down the Euphrates to Falluja would take three weeks.

Apart from the facilities afforded by river and railway, transport was confined to horses and mules (which, of course, could not operate far from the river), and Ford vans, which had done and were to do yeoman service. But most of them were in need of repair, and the desert was very hard on tyres.

The supply situation was by now fairly satisfactory, thanks largely to Maude's energetic measures. Both food and ammunition were moderately plentiful, and once Baghdad was reached the situation underwent still further amelioration since there were in the town and vicinity considerable stocks of meat, vegetables, forage and fuel.

There was a glaring contrast between the condition of the opposing armies. The British troops were in very good fettle. They had just taken part in a resounding victory; they had complete faith in their brilliant leader—in fact, they "had their tails up." Further, they were well equipped in practically all respects, and enjoyed superiority in the air.

The Turks, on the other hand, were depressed by defeat; they had scattered almost like a covey of partridges towards the end of a shoot. They were now calling to one another in a

desperate attempt to collect their forces before the next onslaught by their redoubtable opponent. Their secret service was also inferior to that of their opponents, which had attained a pitch of efficiency not equalled since the wars of Marlborough. Finally, they were short of all natures of supplies and especially of ammunition.

Factors common to both sides in the coming operations include the following: *The increasing heat*—operations would be difficult in April and almost impossible after that; *the approach of the floods*—their extent varies from year to year: at their worst they would put a stop to active operations. In fact, water seems to be a perennial problem in the Land of the Two Rivers—either there is too much of it or too little. Other difficulties were the *inaccuracy of the maps*, and *the mirage*—though the latter should not deceive the experienced: mirage figures are always motionless.

We are now in a position to resume the narrative, and to see how General Maude tackled his problem.

CHAPTER III

Mushahida and Jebal Hamrin.

No sooner had Maude occupied Baghdad than he prepared a new blow against the remnants of the XVIII Corps, which were believed to be entraining at Mushahida (twenty miles to the north of the city), and holding a covering position to the south of it. A force under General Cobbe, consisting of two squadrons of cavalry, the 7th Division and 46 guns, accompanied by some river gunboats, marched out on the night of March 13th–14th, hoping to arrive within striking distance of the hostile position at dawn. The map was, however, inaccurate, and at dawn there was no enemy in sight. The march was resumed, and presently the Turkish position came in sight. It was so simple that a map is hardly necessary. Its left rested upon the river, whence it extended due west for seven miles. Near the river the ground was broken by ravines and water-cuts. The remainder of the front was open and featureless until the railway was crossed, under a mile from the right flank, which rested on a conical mound.

Four courses were open to General Cobbe.

1. He might attack by the right. This would give him the double advantage of broken ground, and the support of the gunboats. But the river would confine his operations and prevent the threat of an outflanking movement.

2. He might attack by the centre. Considering the extreme dispersion of the enemy, they must be weak everywhere, and a sudden attack on the centre had its attractions. But it just happened that the hostile trenches appeared to be stronger here than anywhere.

3. He might attack by the left; this was the direct line to Mushahida station, and a success here would probably send the Turkish left flying back in haste, if it were not completely cut off.

4. He might make an outflanking movement round the Turkish right. But this would take time, besides adding to the

exhaustion of his troops, who had already marched far; also the Army Commander was beginning to clamour for action.

General Cobbe decided on course (3)—namely, to attack the hostile right flank. There remained the problem: should he make a containing attack on the remainder of the front? Many —perhaps most—commanders would have allotted at least a proportion of troops to holding the front not to be attacked; but Cobbe took the bold course of ignoring it altogether, apart from shelling it with his gunboats. He concentrated his whole force against the decisive point. His plan was admirably simple. The railway formed a good boundary and line of direction. The 28th Brigade was to attack to the right of it, the 21st Brigade (only three battalions) to the left. Half the 19th Brigade was to support the 21st Brigade, the other half was in reserve. The cavalry was to co-operate on the left.

The position can be shown diagrammatically as follows:—

	GURKHAS BLACK WATCH	*Railway*	56TH RIFLES
BHOPALS	(21st Brigade)		(28th Brigade)
	Half 19TH BRIGADE		Half 19TH BRIGADE

The 21st Brigade crossed to the left of the railway two and a half miles short of the position, and advancing steadily came into close contact at 4 p.m. An hour later the Black Watch charged and captured the advanced trenches, while the 56th Rifles, on the other side of the railway, came up abreast of them, and then by a splendid stroke of initiative which cannot be too highly praised swung round their right shoulders on to the railway line, in support of their British comrades of the neighbouring Brigade, who were under a heavy fire. Meantime, the artillery had been outstripped, and a pause ensued for the guns to come up. By 6.25 all was ready, and after an intensive gunfire for five minutes the Black Watch delivered a magnificent charge, capturing the main position in front of them and also the conical mound on the left. Just previously General Fane, commanding the 7th Division, had ordered both Brigades to push on as fast as possible and capture the station, but the 28th Brigade assured him that it would not be possible for them to advance till the conical mound, which dominated the

position, had been captured. A few minutes later this had been done ; but the 28th Brigade still showed no signs of advancing, and when Colonel Wauchope, commanding the Black Watch, tried to induce them to do so, he was informed that they had orders not to advance. They confined themselves to sending out patrols.

Meanwhile the 21st Brigade had suffered severely. The Black Watch had lost over 40 per cent. of their strength ; their ammunition had run low ; they were exceedingly tired and thirsty after the exertions entailed by a long night march, followed by an advance across the open by day and a six hours' battle. The troops to the right showed no signs of going on ; the Gurkhas to the left had also suffered severely, and had only one British officer left. Occasions in war when troops who have attacked and captured a position at dusk, after being in action all day, continue to advance and harry the enemy by night are exceedingly rare, and Colonel Wauchope could not be severely blamed if he had failed to carry out the order. But he had a magnificent battalion under him, one that was still full of fight. He ordered the advance to continue : more than that, he lent an officer and four men to assist the Gurkhas. Encouraged by this timely assistance, the Gurkhas pushed forward also under their new leaders. Those four " other ranks " must have been proud men on that memorable night. Two companies of the Seaforth Highlanders who had been sent up also joined in the advance. At 11.30 p.m. the railway station was reached. It was occupied and a train was heard leaving. The force promptly charged in the darkness ; the Turks fled, leaving a few prisoners in our hands, and the station was captured. The Black Watch Regimental History justly describes this as " the finest achievement of the Battalion in the War."

The Turks lost 1,000 out of a total strength of 5,000, and retreated to Sumaika.

COMMENTS.

There is much to admire in the conduct of this battle. The plan was a simple one, straightforward, and easy to carry out. It observed the principle of concentrating at the decisive spot ; indeed, it took risks to accomplish this, by leaving the remainder of the front completely denuded of troops. Pedants may be inclined to criticise this, holding that it enabled the enemy to transfer his troops from one part of his front to another. But, apart from the fact that " the proof of the pudding is in the

eating," all military history teaches that it is a difficult operation to move troops that are already in the front line laterally in the course of a battle. And it was evident from the length of front held that the vast majority of the defenders must have been deployed in the front line. Therefore the risk was justified. Another bold step was to retain such a small reserve, two out of eleven battalions. At the same time only four battalions were really heavily engaged. The remainder of the force, including cavalry and artillery, only lost 36 men.

Not only was the plan a good one, but the execution also was good (apart from the " stickiness " of the 28th brigade). The cavalry accurately located the right flank of the position, the artillery gave most effective support in spite of the pronounced mirage, and the work of the 21st Brigade was almost up to copybook form.

The 21st Brigade was left on the position, and the remainder of the force was withdrawn to Baghdad. It was not Maude's intention to pursue the enemy farther for the moment.

Operations on the Euphrates.

The XVIII Corps having, for the time being, been disposed of, the Army Commander now turned his attention to the Euphrates. It was probably too late to cut off the Turks retreating up the river, but it was none the less desirable to obtain a permanent hold on the river, as also to prevent the embankment being cut and the land between it and Baghdad flooded. On March 18th the 7th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Division was accordingly sent out with this object. On the 19th it drove off the defenders and captured the town of Falluja. The enemy had succeeded in cutting the embankment before their departure, but preventive measures against flood were successfully taken at Baghdad. The 7th Brigade remained at Falluja.

Operations on the Diyala. (*Map B.*)

The situation on the Diyala was one surpassing in strategical interest that of any operation in the Great War—with the possible exception of Tannenberg. The position was that one army was approaching another (Allied) army, with a hostile force in between the two. The question was: Could the two allied armies (*a*) effect a junction? (*b*) crush between them the opposing hostile force?

The Russian army, under General Baratoff, was approaching

Baghdad from the north-east, driving before it the Turkish XIII Corps. What added to the interest and to the possibilities of the situation was that the line of retreat of the XIII Corps was Kirkuk–Mosul, a line that would take the Turks obliquely across the front of the victorious British army. These possibilities were not lost upon the authorities in Whitehall and at Baghdad. It seemed clear that the decisive point would be Khaniqin. If we and the Russians could concentrate about that spot, and if the XIII Corps stood its ground, we might be able to crush it with overwhelming force.

But the problem was not as simple as appeared on paper. There were the following moderating factors :—

1. It would be necessary to induce the enemy to halt and fight. That is always a difficult task. By attacking them we may pin them to their ground *till nightfall*; under cover of darkness there is scarcely a recorded case in history where a force has been unable to slip away if it wished to—unless, of course, it was surrounded.

2. Lack of transport would limit the force that we could maintain several marches from Baghdad to two mixed brigades and a cavalry division.

3. We were not in direct communication with Baratoff. The only channel of communication at present was via London and Petrograd.

4. There was uncertainty as to the effect that the Russian revolution might have on their operations.

5. There was the inherent difficulty involved in two allied forces joining hands on the battlefield. (Waterloo is a very rare example of the successful accomplishment of this.)

The above considerations probably occurred to the C.I.G.S., for on March 15th a telegram from him placed somewhat of a damper upon the project. It said that no undesirable risks should be taken ; and that an advance on Khaniqin should only be undertaken in adequate force, and when the position at Baghdad was assured. Robertson evidently did not wish to risk another Kut.

The situation on that day (the 15th) was that our advanced troops were in contact with the Turks at Baquba. The Russians were known to have been nearing Kermanshah (100 miles east of Khaniqin) on the 8th—strength : 6,300 sabres, 15,000 rifles, and opposed by part of the XIII Corps and a cavalry brigade.

Part of the 6th Division was heading for Baquba to join up with the 14th Division. The Grand Duke intended a vigorous offensive from Bitlis and from Bane about the end of April.

After careful study of the above situation, Maude decided, despite the hint of the C.I.G.S., to attempt the proposed operation against the XIII Corps. The composition of the force detailed for the purpose was :—

7th Cavalry Brigade.
8th and 9th Brigades of the 3rd Division.
Five batteries (26 guns).

One hundred and fifty Ford vans were allotted for transport. Baquba was the supply base and ammunition refilling point. The force was to live on the country as far as possible, and did in fact succeed in so doing. The Diyala was navigable only for very small boats.

General Keary, commanding the 3rd Division, was placed in command. His orders were to the following effect :—He was to manœuvre so as to impede the Turkish retreat, cut off any detachments that he could and generally assist the Russian pursuit. He was to close up gradually to Shahraban. Accurate synchronisation of movement with the Russians would be necessary. Till further orders he was not to advance beyond Shahraban ; but when he did so he was to act vigorously so as to deal decisively with an enemy whose morale was failing.

Next day (March 19th) came a slight modification of the above orders ; 2,000 Turks were reported moving south from Khaniqin ; they might be part of the 6th Division moving to the help of the 14th Division. Keary was therefore to conceal his strength, draw them on, and at a favourable moment deal vigorously with them. But if they showed no inclination to come on he should attack.

The force concentrated at Baquba on the 19th, and on the 20th the cavalry obtained contact at Jalali. The Russians were now reported to have reached Karind, 60 miles distant from Khaniqin, which it was calculated the Turkish 2nd Division would reach about the 23rd. The situation was daily becoming more exciting.

At this point the student might examine the map closely. Between Keary and his ultimate goal of Khaniqin lay the Jabal Hamrin, a range consisting of " a series of conglomerate hills with rounded crests rising, one behind the other, in an intricate

mass of broken ridges and ravines, to an ultimate height of about 600 feet."* Starting just south of the Diyala, it stretches for one hundred miles in a north-west direction, to the Tigris. It is for the most part impassable to wheeled traffic except at three passes—opposite Qizil Ribat, Qara Tepe and Band-i-Adhaim. This ridge was evidently of supreme importance to the Turks, for they could hold the passes with small forces, whilst engaged in the operation of crossing the river to the north of it. Further, if they succeeded in crossing the river, and if the passes remained in their hands the ridge would form an admirable screen behind which they could concentrate for an offensive move against Baghdad, by whichever of the passes suited them. In some respects this ridge reminds one of the Massanutton Ridge that Stonewall Jackson made such use of in the valley campaign.

Keary's written orders did not specifically refer to the ridge, and the fact that he was not to advance beyond Shahraban without further orders seems to imply that Maude did not attach particular importance to the early seizing of it. Possibly he was still hopeful of drawing on the 6th Division and destroying it well to the south of the Jabal Hamrin. But the 6th Division was showing no signs of being drawn on.

Operations on March 21st were delayed by the discovery of numerous unmarked irrigation cuts and canals, and more bridging material had to be applied for from Baghdad. On that day planes reported that the Turks were crossing the Diyala from east to west at Lambarak (east of Delli Abbas). This was interpreted as a retreat along the Qara Tepe–Kifri road. Maude reported this to Keary and added : " You should get in touch with the enemy and act vigorously so as to pin him to his ground. If too strong for you to attack, pending the arrival of the Russians at Khaniqin about 24th, you should entrench position threatening his crossing over Diyala so that you can readily fall on him when Russians come up, as he must necessarily weaken his front gradually to cross Diyala and continue his retreat. Destruction of his bridge over Diyala would, of course, have excellent effect. Do not get your troops too much strung out in moving on Shahraban, as latter place may be strongly held."

This order may be examined in conjunction with the further information imparted by Maude that evening. Our intelligence service had by now attained to a remarkable degree of pro-

* *Official History*, iii, p. 277.

ficiency, and estimates given by it of the numbers of the enemy and his dispositions may be accepted as substantially correct, unless stated to the contrary. 'It will be worth the student's while, therefore, to mark in pencil on Map B the following distribution of forces on March 21st :—

Near Qizil Ribat : 200 sabres, 2,700 rifles, 20 guns.

At Delli Abbas : 200 sabres, 1,000 rifles, 6 guns.

Near Shahraban : 40 sabres, 2,100 rifles, 4 guns.

Junction of Tigris and Adhaim : 500 sabres, 5,000 rifles, 24 guns.

Ramadi, on the Euphrates : 500 sabres, 3,000 rifles, 22 guns.

Referring back now to Maude's order, we may note that the " drawing on " order has been scrapped ; that the " enemy " is evidently the Shahraban force ; and that the bridge referred to is evidently that at Lambarak.

On March 22nd there was no definite news of the Russians, though there were indications that their advance might be slower than had been expected. Maude sent Baratoff a message (via London) stating that he was trying to cut off XIII and asking for co-operation.

The Turks were entrenched to the west of Shahraban, and Keary tried to find a way round rather than make a frontal attack. Meanwhile he received another message from Maude which stated : " It looks very much as if the enemy had been slipping away all night across the Diyala. . . . It is of utmost importance that you should pin him to his ground, and if he will not be so pinned and retreats, you should attack him vigorously."

This was the third reference to " vigorous " action in a few days, and Keary decided to attack next morning. But in the night the enemy had slipped away. Shahraban was occupied and the enemy pursued to the line of the Haruniya Canal (see Sketch Map 1).

On this day (March 23rd) the cavalry brigade (less 13th Lancers and one section of " V " R.H.A.) was withdrawn, as the entire XVIII Corps had crossed to the east bank of the Tigris and looked like also crossing the Adhaim and advancing east. This might be the beginning of a converging move by XIII and XVIII. To be prepared for such a threat, therefore, the cavalry division was being concentrated, and the 40th Brigade was ordered to occupy the line Diltawa–Sindiya.

KEARY'S PLANS. (*Sketch Map* 1.)

The enemy was clearly intending to hold the Jabal Hamrin in the neighbourhood of Mansuriya. Between there and Qizil Ribat he was thought to have 5,300 rifles. Against this Keary could only place 4,600 rifles. (Maude reported this number to London as 8,000 rifles, and it would be interesting to know whether this was a slip of the pen or whether he really believed Keary had superior numbers to his opponent.) Between Keary's force and the position to be attacked lay two unfordable canals, about which little was known, the Haruniya and the Ruz Canals. Keary's task was undoubtedly a difficult one. It is true that he at first was not aware of his numerical inferiority. Still, the enemy was occupying an entrenched position—the Turk is a great digger—and this position was covered by a double waterway which had not been thoroughly reconnoitred. On the other hand, it was plain that the army commander was expecting some definite and vigorous action from him in the near future. The former stated next day that the object now was to hold the enemy in the vicinity of Qizil Ribat to his ground.

This was the third injunction to hold or pin the enemy to his ground, but, as we have seen, it is almost impossible to hold an enemy to his ground against his will for more than a single day. However, General Keary " came to the conclusion that he could best . . . . pin the enemy to his ground and prevent him slipping across the Diyala by attacking and, if possible, turning the Turkish left flank."* He therefore decided to secure the heights to the east of the Turkish position and drive the enemy off the Khaniqin road westwards on to the river. The flanking force consisted of the 9th Brigade and " B "/15th Battery supported by the 13th Lancers and the section of " V "—all under the command of General Campbell. The 8th Brigade, supported by the bulk of the artillery, was to hold the enemy in front and only advance to the attack when Campbell's attack had made itself felt. The attack by the 8th Brigade was then to be driven home.

THE ACTION OF THE JABAL HAMRIN, MARCH 25TH.

During the night of March 23rd–24th Campbell's force moved forward preparatory to attacking next day; but it was delayed by having to bridge both canals. Shortage of pontoons

* *Official History*, iii, p. 278.

resulted in the Ruz Canal not being bridged until 8.30 p.m. on the 24th. Meanwhile the 8th Brigade had got across the Haruniya Canal, only to find the bridge over the Ruz Canal destroyed. Here again shortage of material caused serious delay; in fact, the canal was still unbridged when the battle started at dawn on the 25th. The 8th Brigade was therefore told to place two battalions at the disposal of the G.O.C. with a view to reinforcing Campbell's force.

By midnight Campbell had crossed the Ruz Canal, leaving the cavalry to protect his right flank. He also left "B"/215th in action south of the canals as he feared to risk it crossing in case the bridges should be destroyed by shell fire. Actually, the cavalry had found an intact bridge about four miles further to the right, but it was not made use of. It was hoped that as the attack progressed the guns of the main force would be able to assist it.

The 9th Brigade reached the foothills without opposition at 1.30 a.m. and remained there in a perimeter camp till an hour before dawn when the advance was resumed on a bearing of 51 degrees. On reaching the crest, still without opposition, the force turned half-left, in accordance with orders, and proceeded along the crest. The advance was in diamond formation, Dorsets leading. After advancing about a mile the Dorsets were held up; "B"/215th could not get the range to cover them effectively (the artillery problem was in any case a difficult one) and the left battalion (1/1st Gurkhas) were ordered to halt on reaching the crest till the machine guns came up. Consequently a gap of over 1,000 yards was formed. The Dorsets were isolated and without artillery support, and eventually they were pressed back. Reinforcements for the enemy could be plainly seen coming up. At noon "B"/215th were sent over the canals and came into action in some sandhills and fired over 100 rounds, obtaining some excellent targets. But the 9th Brigade was steadily pushed back, all its battalions being now in the line; and at 2.30 p.m. it was ordered to fall back over the canal under cover of two battalions sent up from the 8th Brigade. This retirement was completed by 5 p.m.

Meanwhile, the 8th Brigade took no action, apart from intensive machine-gun and rifle fire. In truth, they could do nothing else as the bridge had not yet been built, a simple fact that was not overlooked by the Turks.

In the course of the battle Keary received several messages from the army commander. The first (sent off about noon)

hinted at the desirability of passing to the defensive. The second, arriving shortly afterwards, queried the necessity for the 9th Brigade to retire, and the third gave the latest situation as to the Russians and added that unless Keary had disseminated his troops they should be able to deal very satisfactorily with the enemy. In an operation order issued at 4.20 p.m., he ordered Keary's force to continue the operations next day on the lines laid down. Night found the 8th Brigade holding the whole front, behind which the 9th Brigade, who had suffered nearly 1,000 casualties, were reorganizing.

COMMENTS.

The intention was to hold the enemy to his ground and prevent him crossing the river. It was decided that the best way to do this was to attack him. Accepting this for the moment, the student may be puzzled at the reflection that precisely the same course of action (namely, to attack the enemy) would be adopted if a diametrically opposite result (namely, to drive him from his ground) were intended. How is the unfortunate enemy to know which course is expected of him? The student may be further puzzled by the reflection that the intention was given in orders to drive the enemy off his position—not to hold him to it—and yet again by the statement made in the course of the battle to the army commander that the intention was to find out if the enemy were the stronger and, according to whether he was or was not, to hold him to his ground or drive him off it. There would appear to have been some confusion of thought—occasioned possibly by the attempt of two people to fight the same battle.

It seems fair to assume that General Keary must have found it somewhat distracting to receive a stream of messages from his chief whilst in the midst of trying to conduct a battle. In this itch for controlling everything possible himself General Maude resembled the Russian general, Kuropatkin, in the Manchurian War. Both were great men—though the Englishman by far the greater—both had a wonderful command of facts and a powerful intellect; both had exceptional experience, and both were better fitted to conduct a battle than any of their subordinates. Both had the advantages of the telegraph, and both yielded to the temptation to exert their influence for good when the battle was raging. Yet in the case of Kuropatkin the intervention was uniformly disastrous, and it is doubtful if it served any good purpose in the case of Maude.

The army commander's evident fears as to the dissemination of force were justified; it *was* disseminated. There was a gap of four miles between the two brigades, and the attack could only make use of four out of eight battalions, and one out of five batteries. The 8th Brigade failed to prevent reinforcements being sent against Campbell; and naturally so, as the Turks could see that the Ruz Canal had not been bridged by us, and that consequently the 8th Brigade was innocuous. The failure to bridge the canal, in fact, invalidated the whole plan, and Keary would have been wise to postpone the operation. Subconsciously or otherwise, he probably was goaded into action by the ardent spirit that was chained up in Baghdad. In short the elements of success were not present. Ali Ihsan possessed the advantage of interior lines, and he made skilful use of them.

All military plans must be built to some extent on the unknown, but there was perhaps too much of the unknown and of the *contingent* in this case. Maps were bad; the country was unknown, the canals only partially reconnoitred; and the success of the plan was contingent upon Campbell making such progress that the remainder of the force would be enabled to co-operate in his attack. Compare the beautiful simplicity and concentration in the battle of Mushahida. The Jabal Hamrin action, on the other hand, was of a piecemeal nature. Owing to the diamond formation of the attack, coupled with the fact that the left battalion halted when the Dorsets went forward, it was bound to start with one battalion only; later the remainder of the 9th Brigade would make their presence felt; in the third stage the 8th Brigade would also join in. But the third stage was never reached. The fate of the battle was really decided when the Dorsets fell back—in the first hour of the fighting. According to the "Critical Study" by the Quetta Staff College the attack inclined too much to its left, "nor was it pushed on with sufficient vigour."*

THE SEQUEL TO THE ACTION.

On the day of the action the cavalry division was ordered to move north between the Diyala and the Khalis Canal. Unfortunately they took the wrong road, and found themselves west of the Khalis Canal. The 7th Brigade retraced its steps, but the 6th Brigade pushed on, and failing to find a way across it, bivouacked to the west, some ten miles short of Delli Abbas. This is a good example of the complications arising from defective

* *Op. cit.*, p. 321.

maps. On March 26th the 6th Brigade was obliged also to retrace its steps to Diltawa and thence move up the east bank of the Tawila Canal. It should be noted that the Khalis Canal was dry from its junction with the Tawila Canal, whence arose the common and natural mistake of describing the Tawila as the Khalis Canal.

Meanwhile the 7th Cavalry Brigade came into contact with strong hostile forces in position, and was ordered to fall back. This showed that the air report of the enemy crossing the Diyala from east to west at Lambarak had been incorrect. The explanation is that our planes mistook transport for combatant troops—a mistake which occurred with serious consequences in other theatres of the war in addition to occurring several times in Mesopotamia.

On the 26th also, our excellent intelligence service learnt that the enemy intended to initiate that same day a converging movement of XIII and XVIII Corps; 1,600 were to set out from Delli Abbas, and 4,400 from the Adhaim. To counter this movement ample troops were available, and the whole of the 13th Division was ordered to concentrate in the vicinity of Diltawa. It would thus be placed equidistant (about twenty miles) from the two hostile forces. By utilising interior lines, there would be just time to deal with each force separately—unless the Turks moved with unexpected speed. Converging forces that have an enemy in between seldom move with the speed of assurance—each is too fearful of encountering the enemy single-handed. Our prospects were therefore favourable. We could pit 1,000 sabres and about 7,000 rifles against 350 sabres and 6,200 rifles. The margin was not a big one, but the relative condition of the two forces, together with our central position, should be decisive.

On March 27th it began to appear that the enemy aimed at joining up their two forces before attacking. Maude thereupon issued an important operation order in which he said :—

" It is intended to take advantage of the enemy's temerity in concentrating his scattered forces within striking distance of our troops, first by destroying Shattal Adhaim force, which consists of already beaten troops, and then by dealing with Delli Abbas force.

" Keary's column to continue to hold enemy to his ground at Jabal Hamrin and to hinder him from passing troops westward across Diyala. As, with approach of Russians, enemy may

temporarily become stronger in his front, his position to be made as secure as possible.

" Cavalry division to retard and operate vigorously against any advance along Lambarak–Muhurar road.

" III Corps, whilst containing Delli Abbas force towards Chaliya, to attack and rout Shattal Adhaim force with which it is already in touch."

III Corps was also to reinforce the Baquba area, and I Corps was to take an early opportunity of defeating enemy at Ramadi.

The order ended: " Prompt and vigorous action is in all cases necessary to take full advantage of scattered positions of enemy forces, to deal with them before reinforcements from Persia or elsewhere arrive, to give them no time to entrench themselves, to take advantage of fine weather, and to complete operations before floods, which are now due, commence."

This order was plain enough. We will now see how it was carried out. The Ramadi project can be dismissed in a word—it was postponed till a future date owing to various difficulties. As to Keary's column, it will be remembered that it had had orders to continue the operations on the 26th. Keary evidently did not construe this as meaning that he was to continue the action, and activity was confined to patrolling, and to passing a portion of the 8th Brigade across the Ruz Canal. His attitude was a passive one. But it is difficult to see what effective action he could take. He had tried attacking, and that had not been a success. The only alternative to remaining passive or attacking was to manœuvre. But a wide turning movement by his right would have taken him away from water, and the reference in the orders to making his position secure seemed to be incompatible with manœuvring. So Keary's force remained stationary, while the XIII Corps continued to cross the Diyala unhindered and in its own time.

The cavalry division on the 27th at first fell back, but later regained ground, reaching the vicinity of Chaliya. A battalion was sent to support them, a procedure usual in both French and German armies, but not in ours.

Finally, we come to the action of the 13th Division against the Adhaim force. But this will require a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Duqma.

(*Sketch Map* 2.)

PURSUANT to its intention of joining forces with the XIII Corps, the 52nd Division of the XVIII Corps crossed the Adhaim and pushed forward to Mara, where it halted for the time being and entrenched. Here the 13th Division, which had closed up to its front, found it on March 27th. The Turkish right rested on the Tigris and was protected by marshy ground in its right front. The line extended north-east for about two and a half miles. This was the main position, but there was a flank position four miles farther north. This position faced south-east, with its back to some ruins.

General Cayley, commanding the 13th Division, having received orders to attack and destroy the enemy, decided to attack the position in front with the 40th Brigade, while the 39th Brigade, supported by the Herts Yeomanry and the 13th Motor Battery, attacked the flank position. Two battalions of the 38th Brigade were to hold an " outpost line " from Sindiya to Abu Tamar, and the remaining two battalions formed the reserve. On the 28th General Andrus, commander of the 39th Brigade, made a personal reconnaissance of the flank position, and during the following night he led his brigade skilfully to a point in the desert five miles east of his objective. The stage was set.

THE ACTION OF DUQMA, MARCH 29TH.

As day dawned the 40th Brigade found itself about 5,000 yards distant from the Turkish advanced line, consisting of a line of rifle-pits, situated less than 1,000 yards in front of their main position. At 7 a.m. the Wiltshires advanced to the attack. Pushing straight forward with great spirit, in spite of the heavy gun and rifle fire poured into them, they did not come to a halt till they had captured the rifle-pits in their front. Here they were joined by half the South Wales Borderers, who had advanced on their left rear. And here they proceeded to dig in

while the artillery advanced to closer range in order to support their further advance and assault of the position.

Meanwhile the 39th Brigade was also doing well. Covered by the Yeomanry and motor battery on their right, the Warwicks and the Gloucestershire advanced abreast to within 3,000 yards of the hostile position, over perfectly open ground. It was now 10.30 a.m. and the heat and mirage were getting very bad. The front line was joined on the left by the third (and last) battalion. Thus early in the battle the general had parted with his only reserve. A halt was now made for three hours to allow the worst of the heat to pass off, and also to allow time for further reconnaissance. The artillery came up to close range, and at about 2 p.m. the advance was resumed. All three battalions advanced in line, splendidly supported by their guns. During this advance marauding bands of Arabs threatened the rear of the column, and several times succeeded in cutting the cable. This somewhat alarming situation was dealt with by brigade headquarters. All available men, cooks and orderlies, seized rifles and repelled this new and unexpected enemy, without the advance being delayed in the slightest, and without any troops being diverted from the attack. The advance was carried out with great dash and gallantry, in spite of the heat, and the position was captured. The enemy fled to the north and a battery narrowly escaped capture. The troops were tired, but exhilarated with victory. Gunning could still be heard from the main position four miles to the south. Evidently the enemy was still in position. But he was almost surrounded. A short two miles to the south-west ran the road leading back to the Adhaim. There were now three possible courses of action: (1) To continue the advance to the road. (2) To swing to the south and co-operate with the 40th Brigade in its attack. (3) To remain where they were.

Leaving the student pondering over these three alternatives, we must now return to the 40th Brigade, whom we left preparing to launch the main attack. This attack was never launched. The mirage handicapped the artillery and it could not subdue the enemy's guns; and the only action taken when the 39th Brigade advanced to the attack was to send forward strong patrols. These patrols encountered the concentrated fire of the enemy and failed to locate exactly the hostile position. All idea of an attack, even under cover of darkness, was eventually abandoned. At 4.30, however, two battalions of the 38th Brigade were ordered to join the 39th Brigade, whilst the reserve

was reinforced by a battalion of the 14th Division. It was decided to make the postponed attack next morning.

And meanwhile what was the victorious 39th Brigade doing? It had adopted the third course, and was digging in. A semi-circular position was held for the night, as the column felt itself very isolated. But the night passed quietly, and dawn disclosed, to the general relief, the fact that the Turks had all decamped in the night. Our troops were thankful for a quiet night; still more were the Turks, who used it to slip away to the north.

COMMENTS.

This little battle raises points of quite exceptional interest for the student. In the first place, the orders were explicit—to destroy the hostile force. The fact that such a wide turning movement was undertaken by the 39th Brigade seems to show that a real effort was to be made to carry out that order. Yet we have seen how, when the Turks were almost surrounded, neither column took any further action towards effecting their destruction. There is a reason for everything, and a fairly close scrutiny of the various possible reasons for this omission may bring out some useful lessons. Was the inaction due to thirst? Naturally the troops were thirsty. In any case troops generally have a dry mouth in the anxiety of battle, and water does not assuage this type of thirst. But though there *was* a shortage the water-carts and pakhal convoy that accompanied the 39th Brigade saved the matter from becoming really vital.

Was it due to physical fatigue? This could hardly be the case in the 40th Brigade, which had been practically stationary since 10.30 a.m. The 39th Brigade had certainly undergone great exertion and were tired. But it is impossible to assert that they were physically incapable of continuing for another two miles (unopposed). The extra fatigue involved would not have been much more than they actually incurred by digging in. And how can a commander be assured that his troops are past exertion, unless he puts it to the test? Appearances may be deceptive. During the last month of the war our infantry at one point came to a halt. It was reported that they were too exhausted to advance farther. Presently a squadron of cavalry charged past them. The infantry rose to their feet and continued the advance without any orders. The psychological triumphed over the physical domain. In the same way we have

seen how at Mushahida the Black Watch morale triumphed over the physical fatigue of the troops.

Was it due to the fear of intervention from the north? There were reports (unfounded in fact) of hostile movements to the north. But cavalry had been sent out in this direction to counter this very contingency. And if danger was really to be feared from this quarter, surely the best way to counter it would be to finish off the job in hand as expeditiously as possible. Delaying the attack till next day would increase the danger. The orders had expressly enjoined that the enemy must be destroyed "before he can be reinforced."

Was it (in the case of the 39th Brigade) due to fear of intervention from the south—*i.e.*, from the enemy retiring from their main position? There *was* a possibility of this, but it was of the slightest. Oh, would some Power the gift give us to see the situation as the enemy sees it! Let us try to picture the feelings of the Turks in the main position. All day long they had heard gunning to the north of them. The sound steadily moved farther west: that is, towards their line of retreat. Occasional vague reports would come through of the fighting going on in that direction. Then silence. What could it mean but that their friends in the flank position had either been captured or had fled north? This meant that their retreat was almost if not quite cut, and a victorious enemy was in their rear. There might just be a chance of escape, but they dared not move till the kindly darkness came to screen their movements. When at long last it came they would slink off as silently as possible, hugging the river. The God of Battle was kind—and they effected their escape.

Was the inaction due to the distance which separated our two columns? This was given as one reason for the inaction of the 40th Brigade: but this surely is rather a reason for speeding up matters, and hastening the time when the two separated portions shall draw together again.

Yet there must be *some* rational reason. It is easy for the armchair critic, poring over the situation on the map, to spot the right solution. If the battle had been conducted as a war-game the veriest tyro could have realized the sort of action that was required of the 39th Brigade. But conditions on the actual battlefield are so very different from the conditions of a war-game, and those with practical experience can easily imagine the sort of reasons that would appear decisive at the time against

any further offensive action. The following are some of the factors that would suffice to bring about that result :—

1. *Lassitudo certaminis*, that physical and mental reaction that supervenes on the conclusion of a hard day's fighting, and which is the cause of so many chances being lost.

2. Lack of realisation of the enemy's position, due partly to the fog of battle and partly to lack of imagination. What is required is that gift that Wellington was always cultivating—the gift of picturing what is going on the other side of the hill, or in this case the other side of the mirage.

3. The sense of isolation. The 39th Brigade had been separated from the main body for several hours, communications were frequently cut by the Arabs, and the paralysing sense of the unknown rested heavily upon them. They might be attacked by reinforcements from the east ; the enemy retreating from the south might in desperation try to rush them ; there were the Arabs, and vague reports of the XIII Corps to the north. Is it surprising that all idea of offensive action was gradually replaced by the instinct of self-preservation, and that they hastened to entrench themselves in a semi-circle ?

We come next to the question of the use of reserves—a question on which this battle throws some light. We have noted how all three battalions of the 39th Brigade were thrown into the attack. In making this striking departure from the normal, Andrus presumably argued somewhat as follows : " I do not know how strong the hostile position is. Two battalions *may* suffice to capture it, but mayhap not. If they fail and I throw in the third to make a further attack, the chances are that that also will fail. It generally does in war. It will be better to put it in *from the start* and make more sure of it. Admittedly it leaves me with no fresh troops for exploitation. But exploitation does not seem indicated in this case, else I should have been given a bigger force. And in any case before I can exploit I have got to make sure of capturing the position. We must first catch our hare before we can cook it. If we fail to do this my exploitation battalion will be wasted."

The narrower the frontage of attack the greater the volume of converging fire that can be directed upon it. The broad front of the 9th Brigade on this occasion (three battalions in line) succeeded ; the narrow front of one battalion at Jabal Hamrin failed. A further point : If fresh troops had been available they might have pushed on beyond the ruins. But what do we

mean by "fresh" troops? A reserve battalion would have had to cover the same distance, on the same rations, and with the same amount of water, as the first-line troops. They would have undergone almost as much exertion as the others. "Freshness" in their case would in fact merely denote spiritual rather than physical freshness. If therefore the spiritual level can be maintained in the first-line troops (as for instance it was in the case of the Black Watch at Mushahida), the first-line troops should be able to do as well as "fresh" troops brought up. All of which tends to show that General Andrus' bold procedure was sound and deserving of admiration.

One curious point to note is that the wide dispersion of the two attacking brigades, while it was instrumental in securing the defeat of the Turk, was, paradoxically, a powerful factor in saving them from complete destruction owing to the feeling of isolation engendered. The moral seems to be that in war "Safety first" leads to "Victory last."

There was never much danger for our troops, could we but have known it. The total number of the Turks was only about 3,000, and their force at the ruins was completely surprised by the appearance of the 39th Brigade. The ball was at our feet. It only wanted kicking.

Another curious point is that our Intelligence was on this occasion *too* well informed. The 14th Division was indeed, as reported, ordered to go to the help of the 52nd Division, but it disobeyed orders and withdrew instead. Better had it been for us had we never heard the report at all, for then we might have concentrated an overwhelming force against the 52nd Division, and there would have been no temptation to "take counsel of our fears."

Finally there is the matter of the "outpost line" which frittered away two battalions. It seems an excessive precaution to form an outpost line *behind* a force advancing to attack an inferior enemy. It is reminiscent of the tactics of the White Knight, who had a mouse-trap on his horse's croup, because he wished to be ready for any conceivable contingency.

NARRATIVE.

The 13th Division did not pursue to the Adhaim, but retired to Diltawa. While the battle of Duqma was being fought, Ali Ihsan, having thrown a bridge over the Diyala south-west of Khaniqin, was crossing to the west side, unhindered and indeed unspotted by Keary's force. Next day the Cavalry

Division occupied Delli Abbas, and on the 31st our infantry occupied the Jabal Hamrin, on the departure of the enemy. On the same day the cavalry were withdrawn to Diltawa. The Russians, who had been delayed for ten days at the Tai Paq Pass, were at last nearing Qasr-i-Shirin. On April 1st Keary reached Qizil Ribat, where a Russian squadron joined hands with him next day. At the same time Maude obtained contact by air with Pavloff (who had succeeded Baratoff). To him Maude suggested that the Russians should pursue the XIII Corps towards Kifri while the British dealt with the XVIII Corps on the Adhaim.

It must be conceded that Ali Ihsan (the XIII Corps Commander) had handled his corps with considerable skill. Though heavily outnumbered by his opponents, he had made the fullest use of the interior lines that his force possessed. He had held off the Russians with a force of only two battalions, he had combined the 14th and 6th Divisions to threaten and finally to defeat the bulk of our 3rd Division, thus allowing his 2nd Division to escape unscathed; and he had even attempted to threaten our 13th Division at Duqma, and would have succeeded if his orders had been obeyed by the 14th Division. He had good reason to be pleased with himself. We can see now that had we been able to seize the Jabal Hamrin before the arrival of the 6th Division things would probably have fared far worse with Ali Ihsan.

Halil (the Army Commander) is also to be commended for his courageous and soldierly instinct in attempting to concentrate against the 13th Division in spite of his numerical weakness. He realized that the offensive is the best form of the defensive.

There was, however, no real danger to the 13th Division. It was backed up by the bulk of the 14th. We had abundant troops, which prompts the question: Was Maude justified in not allowing Marshall to pursue the 52nd Division across the Adhaim? Remembering Napoleon's cardinal error in not following up his preliminary successes in his Leipsic campaign, one may be disposed to doubt it. But the Turk had had on the whole a worse drubbing than had the Prussians or Austrians and could safely be disregarded for a few days. That being so, the more concentrated we remained the better, until Maude was ready for his next spring.

CHAPTER V

Back to the Diyala.

The Situation at the Beginning of April.

General Maude could on the whole look back with satisfaction on the operations of the last fortnight of March. Though there had been disappointments, the area round Baghdad had been cleared of the enemy for a distance of fifty miles. The supply and transport situation was daily improving. Baghdad was safe from floods. The troops were in good fettle, and a new division, the 15th, was forming on the Euphrates. In Palestine First Gaza had just been fought and Jerusalem had, as a consequence, become our objective. On the distant horizon dawned the prospect of joining forces with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at Aleppo.

But on the Russian side the prospects were not so bright. The army at Bane was still snow-bound. Pavloff was showing no signs of crossing the Diyala; it appeared that he had only 3,000 troops at Khaniqin, and that these were of poor quality; he had driven the Turks out of Persia, and showed no inclination to follow them into Mesopotamia. (The frontier runs through Khaniqin.) Finally, the Russian revolution appeared to be having unsettling influences on the troops. More and more it began to appear that we would be wise not to count on them for any combined operations.

Meanwhile, the weather was getting unpleasantly hot, and the troops still had their winter clothing. The heat was also preventing our planes going up in the middle of the day. The Turks were reported to be short of food and ammunition; but reinforcements were on their way, including a dozen new "Halberstadts," which would be superior to anything the Royal Flying Corps could pit against them. We were no longer to have it all our own way in the air, it appeared.

Maude's Plan.

The XIII Corps had withdrawn out of range, but the XVIII Corps was still within reach of a blow, the 51st Division being

about Balad and the 52nd on the Adhaim. Maude therefore decided to attack XVIII. Keary's force was withdrawn south of the Jabal Hamrin, and the 7th and 13th Divisions received orders to prepare attacks on the west and east banks respectively of the Tigris. The 14th Division was scattered in the area Baquba–Baghdad (which place maintained throughout a large garrison), and it may be wondered why this division was not given its share of the fighting. But its sister division (the 13th) was the only British division of the army ; it was Maude's old division, and it is natural that he should wish to have it on the spot when hard blows were to be struck.

NARRATIVE.

The situation on April 7th was that Marshall had concentrated the bulk of the 13th Division and half the 35th Brigade of the 14th one mile north of Duqma, with the 40th Brigade watching the Adhaim. An improvised cavalry brigade, consisting of the 21st Cavalry from the 6th Brigade, half the 32nd Lancers (III Corps cavalry) and a section each from " S " and " D "/66th Batteries, under the command of Colonel Cassels, was also watching the Adhaim.

On April 8th the 7th Division, advancing up the west bank, captured Balad station, and the 51st Division retired before it to Istabulat.

Everything was developing favourably when suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came the report that the XIII Corps was again advancing on both sides of the Khalis Canal. The cavalry division was watching them once more opposite Delli Abbas. The strategical situation had become exceedingly interesting. Evidently Halil was trying once again to crush Marshall's force between his two corps, contemptuously ignoring the position of the Russians on his flank—audacity again, always audacity ! If the student will mark the dispositions in pencil on Map B he will see at once the extent of Halil's (or Ali Ihsan's) temerity. To complete the picture he must show the cavalry division and the 1st/2nd Gurkhas near Tijdari ; half the 35th Brigade on the line Diltawa–Sindiya and the 8th, 9th, 36th and 37th Brigades between Baquba and Baghdad. The XIII Corps can be shown as crossing the Jabal Hamrin on the Qara Tepe–Delli Abbas road. That is the situation on April 8th.

Now what should Maude do ? Should he continue with his present plan, trusting to the cavalry and half the 35th Brigade to hold up XIII in the meanwhile ? Should he call up his

spare troops between Baquba and Baghdad? Or should he postpone his present plan until Marshall should have turned and dealt with XIII? The student may be disposed to favour the second course; but Maude turned it down, probably on the score of the transport problems that it would raise. It certainly adds to the strategical interest of the operations that these four brigades were left out of the picture. That being so, we are left with the alternative: Should Marshall persist with his attack on the Adhaim, or should he turn back to dispose of the enemy in his rear first? Marshall himself was in favour of the bolder of these two courses, calculating that he had time to drive off the 52nd Division and then turn on XIII. He argued that the longer he delayed his attack on XIII the further it would push the covering force south, which would give him the greater chance of crumpling up the audacious intruder when he did strike.

It is an attractive proposition, but Maude, rightly or wrongly, vetoed it. The army commander's argument was that to allow XIII to penetrate south practically at his will would transfer the advantage of interior lines to the enemy. Ali Ihsan might beat the cavalry and its supports before Marshall had arrived upon the scene, and then turn his whole corps upon the latter.

But Marshall might point out that to utilize interior lines one must have time and space to manœuvre. Now if Ali Ihsan were permitted to penetrate as far, say, as Diltawa, and the large surplus forces in the vicinity of Baghdad were in the meantime marshalled against him, and if these engaged him simultaneously with the 13th Division he would have neither requisite time nor space, wedged in between the Tigris and Diyala, to make use of his interior lines.

Be this as it may, the action ordered by the army commander was that the cavalry division should come under the orders of Marshall who was to deal with the XIII Corps before continuing operations against the 52nd Division. Ali Ihsan was expected to advance on both sides of the Khalis Canal which, Maude pointed out, should afford Marshall an exceptional opportunity for dealing him a heavy blow. Our intelligence prophesied that the enemy would advance before dawn on April 9th, and reach that day a point about eight miles west of Delli Abbas. And so it turned out—almost exactly. On April 9th the cavalry division fell back before the advancing XIII Corps admirably covered by "S" and "V" Batteries,

who retired alternately, inflicting heavy losses on the Turks who were advancing deployed on a front of three miles.

Receiving news the same day of the enemy's advance, Marshall sent his half 35th Brigade to Diltawa, but his main body did not budge. Meanwhile a curious incident occurred. An aeroplane reported that a hostile force, 5,000 strong, was actually south of the cavalry division and advancing still further south, and the cavalry were informed that they were in danger. The enterprising enemy turned out to be the cavalry's own transport—but not 5,000 strong!

The 35th Brigade reached Abu Tamar that night (April 9th) where General Thomson, its commander, collected in all three and a half battalions and occupied the line Muhurar–Sindiya. Next morning, April 10th, Maude reported that the XIII Corps (computed at 6,000 rifles and 28 guns) intended to resume its march, and he issued an operation order giving his intention of attacking and dealing decisively with its 2nd and 14th Divisions. But still Marshall did not budge. Was he concocting some hidden operation? He was. At this highly interesting stage the student should jot down on a sheet of paper a rough diagram of the respective forces. It will take this form: Knock a capital L on to its back. The angle now represents the position of Thomson's force, 2,000 rifles. Five miles up the short leg will be the cavalry division, 1,000 sabres and 500 rifles. A further ten miles up the leg will be the 2nd and 14th Turkish Divisions, 6,000 rifles. Now along the long leg: At twelve miles from the angle mark the 39th Brigade (at Duqma) with Cassels' 400 sabres in front of it. Eight miles further along the leg mark the 40th and 38th Brigades, the former facing east, the latter west, and beyond them mark the 52nd Turkish Division (on the Adhaim), 4,300 rifles. Each of our brigades can be shown as just over 2,000 rifles.

From this diagram we can see that the two sides (including the 52nd Division) were approximately equal numerically (though Marshall had 90 guns against 60). But Marshall had two strategic advantages. The first was the fact that the River Adhaim separated the Turkish forces—he should thus be able to contain the 52nd Division with an inferior force. The second was that he possessed interior lines, with space to manœuvre. But had he also *time* to manœuvre?

If he received early news of the Turks' advance, our diagram shows that he should be able to concentrate approximately equal forces at the pivotal point, even without allowing for the cavalry

causing the enemy any delay; and that about three hours later the 40th Brigade should arrive and turn the scale. Thus, if the enemy continued to advance we should be able to concentrate against him in time, though the margin would be small. But what if the enemy did not advance after all? Up to noon on the 10th he showed no sign of coming on. Marshall therefore made the following plan which was calculated to deal with the situation next day, whether he came on or not. The 39th and 40th Brigades concentrated in Duqma camp whence they advanced at 10 p.m. that same day, April 10th—not towards Thomson's force, but towards Chaliya. It was hoped that it would at dawn be in position to strike the enemy in his right flank if he advanced. If he sat still it presumably would have to advance and attack him. Prior to the arrival of Cayley's two brigades, Thomson's force was to help the cavalry, if required, to hold up the enemy. In any case Marshall intended, when Caley's force attacked, that the cavalry division should be withdrawn in readiness for an enveloping movement round the hostile right flank.*

THE KHALIS CANAL, APRIL 11TH.

After a twelve mile march through the night Cayley's force reached at dawn a spot on the railway five miles west of Chaliya. Here it halted and ate breakfast, and got into touch with the cavalry. The latter were falling back on both sides of the Khalis Canal. The Turks were following them rapidly. "S" and "V" Batteries as usual punished them heavily, but without appreciably delaying them. At 8.30 Cayley's force resumed its advance, Cassels' brigade being sent forward to hold a line of mounds about one and a half miles east of the railway. The 40th Brigade was leading, directed on Chaliya. But presently the cavalry were seen to be falling back from the mounds and the two leading battalions—the Welch Fusiliers and Cheshires—changed direction half left and quickened their pace, making for the mounds. Instinctively they realized that the Turks must be making for them too, from the other side, and the affair developed into a race. Our troops won by a short head, and were just in time to pour in a volley at short range. To complete the Turkish discomfiture the 66th Artillery Brigade

* The *Official History* is incorrect in suggesting that this intention was not communicated to the Cavalry Division till next morning. The order was received by the Division that night and passed on to its brigades.

dashed up and came into action at a range of 1,200 yards. The Turks were taken by surprise and fell back losing heavily.

The 39th Brigade and Cassels' cavalry were then sent round to the left to turn the enemy's flank, and they came in at exactly the right time and place. The Turkish open right flank was taken completely by surprise, and even before fire was opened it began to fall back. By an extraordinary piece of good fortune Cayley's force had been marching towards precisely the right spot to hit the hostile moving flank. A grand opportunity appeared to offer of rolling up the Turkish line, which was very extended and possessed little depth. The 39th Brigade prepared to push home its advantage. But just as the blow was about to descend the arm was stayed. Despite the protests of both brigadiers and of Colonel Cassels, the force commander stopped the attack. There was a gap of about two miles between the 40th Brigade and 1st/2nd Gurkhas, who were one mile north of Abdulla Afandi, and the Official History suggests that the general considered it necessary to fill up this gap before continuing his attack. Whatever the reason, the battle which was just developing came to an end in this part of the field, and the enemy gradually withdrew some hundreds of yards.

Meanwhile, the cavalry division had fallen back somewhat rapidly before the oncoming Turks. It was under 1,000 sabres strong, and cannot be blamed for not making much of a stand against such odds. But " S " Battery, on the extreme right, covered itself with glory, obtaining what an enthusiastic subaltern described as " the target of a lifetime." One section was detached and the remainder (three guns) came into action in four successive positions, exacting a heavy toll of the enemy. In the third position it remained in action, with a squadron as escort on the right flank, long after the cavalry had retired. It then got away under gun and rifle fire, losing its captain and five men in so doing; but it managed to rejoin the division which was then two miles in rear, near the previous night's bivouac. The Battery fired over 500 rounds that day.

But the Turks did not come on when they became aware of the threat to their right flank, and after 10 a.m. the action died away on this part of the front also. The cavalry division concentrated near their bivouac, and received orders to send their horses to the rear and fight it out in a defensive position with the Gurkhas prolonging the line to their left. It will be observed that the order (which was repeated by Marshall in the morning) for the cavalry to make an enveloping movement

round the Turkish right was not carried out. No doubt the chief reason was that Thomson's force had not advanced from its position about Abu Tamar, over four miles to the south of the battlefield. But this situation was rectified at 11.40 a.m. when Thomson received the order to move forward with all available troops at once and report for orders at General Cayley's headquarters.

At 3 p.m. he arrived there, and one hour later received orders to attack the Turkish left at 4.30 p.m. The attack—or rather advance, for there was practically no opposition—commenced and by dusk had only got one mile ahead of the line held by the Gurkhas. On this line the force proceeded to dig in. Cayley's force had also dug in and attempted no further advance.

The force was ordered to "consolidate" during the night. Whilst doing so the Turks slipped quietly away. Over 300 Turks had been killed, mostly by artillery fire. Our casualties were 264, or under 3 per cent., of which the cavalry division had one man killed and eight wounded, or 1 per cent.

COMMENTS.

Thus, for the second time in a fortnight the 13th Division had, after an extraordinarily promising start, somehow failed to make good their opportunity, and once again it seems important to search out the reason.

The heat was worse than ever, but this affected the enemy as much as our troops. Nor can our failure be put down to lack of spirit on the part of the men. The 40th Brigade made a magnificent advance, and the 39th Brigade asked for nothing better than to push in. It seems to have been again a case of "taking counsel of your fears"—fear on account of the gap in the centre, and fear of a possible advance by the Turks from the Adhaim. Yet the best counter to the danger due to a gap in the line is to take the offensive yourself at some other part of the line, especially if it be the flank. We have seen how the mere threat of an attack on the Turkish right brought the remainder of his force to a halt, and thus automatically protected the gap in the line.

As to the fear of intervention by the Adhaim force, it should be noted that it was as unfounded as the fear of intervention at Duqma. Both fears had unfortunate results on the action and point to the truth of the maxim that to gain the full effect from interior lines you must have ample time and space. The feeling that the enemy is close about one's flanks can have a paralysing

effect. Thus Marshall had not really the space he required, and this seems to justify his original desire to push the 52nd Division further away before turning on the XIII Corps. On the actual battlefield he had tactical exterior lines, which is, of course, a great advantage, especially as the Turks were extended in one long line instead of being in a formation in which they could manœuvre.

In spite of the happy approach march of Cayley's force, we did not achieve concentration on the battlefield—always a difficult thing to bring about in open warfare. There seems to have been some lack of co-ordination here. It was Marshall's intention that Thomson should assist the cavalry to hold up the enemy; yet the former did not reach the battlefield till about 3 p.m. Was this delay in reinforcing the cavalry due to the instinct of "safety first" which had already had such a baneful influence on our operations?

Altogether there seems to have been a great chance for resolute leadership. Now Sir William Marshall, who was in supreme command of the battle, was noted as a resolute leader as far back as the Boer War. How comes it, then, that he did not make his personality felt? The answer is simple: He was not on the battlefield at the critical moment; he was only in touch with it by wire, and one cannot put one's personality into telegrams. The reason for his absence from the battlefield was that he had two fronts to consider, the Khalis Canal and the Adhaim; he therefore remained centrally situated at Sindiya.*

This brings us to the question of the system of command. It certainly seems to have been a bit top-heavy. Operation orders decreeing a battle were issued by Maude. Further orders for the conduct of the battle were issued by Marshall, under whom were three mutually independent formations, and Cayley issued orders for his own force, and, as the senior officer present on the battlefield, was the only person capable of co-ordinating the fight as it developed, though neither the cavalry nor Thomson's force were nominally under him. No man can watch two fronts simultaneously, and Marshall might have been well advised to hand over the complete control of the battle to Cayley. This division and confusion of command may go part way to explain why the cavalry did not make their flanking attack, even after the arrival of Thomson's force.

The Turks showed an odd mixture of boldness and hesitation.

* Later in the day he did visit the battle front.

Their conception was bold, as also was the inception of the operation, but they hesitated fatally on the 10th. Then on the 11th boldness returned to them, as shown by their fearless and rapid advance in a single slender line four miles long. Finally, the threat to their right flank seems to have paralysed them into inactivity, and all the fight suddenly went out of them.

The most satisfactory feature of the fight was the prompt and vigorous dash to the mounds by Lewin's 40th Brigade and its artillery.

NARRATIVE.

In spite of the disappointments of the 11th, prospects for the 12th were good. Though the "heavy blow" that had been ordered had not been delivered the Turkish advance had been stayed; superior forces had been concentrated against them; the cavalry was intact; they had been stationary since about 10 a.m., water was handy, and they had gone into bivouac at 7 p.m., so they should be comparatively fresh. The day was likely to be hot again, so an early start was desirable. But it was not till 7 a.m. that the cavalry division received orders (from Marshall) to pursue in the direction of Delli Abbas—that is, straight to their front. Reports had been received in the night that the enemy was in full retreat. The pursuit therefore commenced in column formation, with advanced guard, starting point, etc. After proceeding about seven miles contact was gained, and the leading regiment deployed. Later the second regiment was thrown out as a left-flank guard. The other regiments did not deploy at all, and the remainder of the day was spent in observation. At 4.45 p.m., after the infantry had passed through them, they went back to bivouac.

But the infantry were later still in starting. Maude expected them to be on the move about 4 a.m. However, the morning was spent in reconnaissance, although the cavalry was on ahead. "Necessity for thorough reconnaissance delayed the start."*

At about 3 p.m., after the G.O.C. of the 40th Brigade had gone forward to cavalry headquarters and had the dispositions pointed out to him, his brigade went forward, with the 35th Brigade on its right. The latter got within one and a half miles of the Turkish position. The 40th Brigade, which had been considerably delayed in starting, eventually deployed its leading battalion (it was advancing in column). This battalion got to within 2,000 yards of the hostile position by dusk, and during

* *The South Wales Borderers in the Great War.*

the night advanced another 1,000 yards. During the day the cavalry divisional commander conveyed his congratulations to his division on their work the previous day, mentioning in particular their artillery. This was the second day of disappointment, but if the enemy continued next day to hold their position which had been located stretching from Bint al Hassan to the railway, there was still a good chance of delivering the "heavy blow."

On April 13th Cayley ordered Cassels to move over to the left flank and the infantry to advance at 5.30 a.m. The cavalry division, however, did not get orders to advance till 6.45 a.m. It was then ordered to move round the left and act vigorously against the enemy's rear, cutting him off from the Kifri road. At 10 a.m. they obtained touch with Cassels, who was already ahead, and they continued to advance to the vicinity of Garfa, where "S" Battery came into action. Patrols which were sent on reported that they could not find any open flank and that the position appeared to extend to the foothills. The cavalry commander evidently accepted this report without having it confirmed by action, for at 2 p.m. he ordered the 7th Brigade, which was leading, to abandon any further attempt to outflank the enemy, as he considered that the Turkish flank extended to the hills. The 7th Brigade therefore halted and shortly afterwards fell back. At 6 p.m. the cavalry retired to bivouac behind the infantry—casualties : one man wounded.

Meanwhile, at 11.45 the 35th Brigade had captured the enemy's advanced position and about eighty prisoners, but owing to the heat they then halted. The 40th Brigade for some reason did not advance at the time ordered, 5.30 a.m. ; in fact, not until 3.30 p.m., when the Welch Fusiliers attacked on a one-company front. The line advanced a mile suffering but few casualties. It then halted owing to heavy fire and to the fact that both its flanks were in the air. If a brigade advances on a single-company front its flanks are likely to be "in the air." The divisional commander sent his prompt congratulations to the Fusiliers on their fine advance.

Thus for the third day in succession a morning bright with hope led to an evening dark with disappointment. By now General Maude was evidently becoming somewhat restive, and he ordered the operations to be continued with the object of striking a heavy blow against the hard-pressed enemy. But of actual operations on the 14th there were practically none. The cavalry moved off at 8 a.m., again to the left flank. Four

hours later they had only got abreast of Cassels who, as usual, was first in the field, and was in the vicinity of Garfa. Seventy Turks were driven off and one regiment was slightly shelled. At 6.30 they returned to their old bivouac. Casualties for the day: one killed. The original plan was for the infantry to attack at 1.30 p.m., but after consideration this plan was abandoned.

But if there was little physical there was considerable literary activity that day. At 8.30 a m. Maude informed Marshall that XIII had altered its intention to retire that day, and was going to hold on till nightfall. Then, at 11.40 a.m., he issued an operation order in which he stated that his intention was to dispose of XIII, which was to be driven back into the Jabal Hamrin, after which a strong containing force was to be left while the remainder returned to the Adhaim and drove off the 52nd Division. Until this was accomplished the 7th Division could not advance west of the Tigris as supplies could not reach them by river. Marshall demurred to leaving a strong containing force, and showed his anxiety to return at once to the Adhaim. But at 4.10 p.m. he ordered the pressure to be maintained.

The Turks, as anticipated, retired that night, and Maude promptly wired that they were to be pursued and attacked. Cassels and the 35th Brigade were therefore ordered to pursue at 1 a.m. followed by the main body at 5 a.m.; but—not for the first time in these operations—there was a tiresome time lag, and the Brigade did not start till 4 a.m. By that time the enemy had completely disappeared, and at 8 a.m. Maude wired that, owing to the enemy having got a six hours' start on the 35th Brigade, the pursuit was to be discontinued unless the retreat was reported to be unduly slow. After six hours of advancing, partly in the dark, the 35th Brigade had covered about ten miles, and was five miles short of the foothills, where a plane reported that the Turks were entrenching. The pursuit was therefore called off, and the XIII Corps once more took shelter behind the friendly Jabal Hamrin, shaken but not disintegrated. Thus closed an operation replete with interest and instruction from start to finish.

COMMENTS.

There is only space to refer to a few of the lessons to be learnt. The weather was increasingly hot, and greater use might have been made of the comparatively cool early morn and evening;

night operations, for which the country was particularly suited, might also have been employed. When carried out in Mesopotamia they were almost invariably successful.

In viewing the operations as a whole, it is impossible to blink the fact that execution fell far short of promise. If either Sir Stanley Maude or Sir William Marshall had been present on the battlefield it is hard to believe that XIII would have got off so lightly. Nevertheless the skilful plans and dispositions of those generals, in which they took advantage of their interior lines, had sufficed without any hard fighting (1) To parry the converging attacks of the XIII and XVIII Corps, and (2) To drive them off in divergent directions. This, after all, was Maude's object, and it was achieved with small loss to us. Our troops had sweated profusely, but " sweat saves blood." It was a type of operation that would have delighted the heart of old Marshal Saxe. The general had gained his object without fighting a pitched battle. Yet even Saxe might remember that his most decisive campaigns were precisely those in which he had been compelled to fight decisive battles. He who fights and gets away will live to fight another day. The Turkish snake was scotched, not killed. Ali Ihsan was still very much alive.

The difference of view of Maude and Marshall as to how far XIII should be pursued is interesting, and the point is an important one, as bearing on the theory of interior lines. Each in turn realized the desirability in such cases of *really* disposing of one enemy before turning on the other : Marshall, in wishing to pursue across the Adhaim after Duqma, and Maude in wishing to pursue into the Jabal Hamrin after the Khalis Canal.

In this operation the " overhead management " was again somewhat top-heavy. Three generals, Maude, Marshall and Cayley, were each endeavouring to conduct the operations, and the results achieved were hardly commensurate with the trouble taken.

By this time it was clear that the Turkish operations were being controlled by some powerful directing brain, and the strategical situation therefore still remained full of interest.

CHAPTER VI

Istabulat and Adhaim.

DURING the operations on the Khalis Canal the 7th Division remained halted at Harba. It was twenty-three miles from its river-head, which could not be brought nearer till we had secured the line of the Adhaim. But all was now ready for this step to be taken. Less than 2,000 Turks were believed to be holding its western bank. Maude therefore redisposed his forces as follows :—

Two defensive lines were left on the Khalis canal to contain the XIII Corps.

Line A. Astride the Khalis Canal at Serajik. Cavalry Division, 39th and 40th Brigades.

Line B. Baquba–Sindiya. 37th Brigade.

This gave a total of twelve and a half battalions, about the equal of any portion of the XIII that was likely to be employed against it.

Marshall's Column on the Adhaim consisted of the 35th and 38th Brigades, say 4,000 rifles and 40 guns.

Cobbe's Column at Harba consisted of the 7th Division and half the 8th Brigade, say 7,500 rifles, opposed by about 9,000 rifles.

Maude's plan was that the two wings should hold the enemy while Marshall struck, and after that Cobbe was to strike.

The Adhaim winds from side to side of a valley a mile wide with steep cliff-like banks. The stream is about eighty yards wide, and in many places fordable. The hostile position was placed on top of the cliffs on the west bank, and was strung out over a distance of three and a half miles. Its distance from the river thus varied between a few yards and a mile.

Marshall determined to take advantage of this fact. The 38th Brigade was to force the crossing and General O'Dowda, its commander, after careful reconnaissance, selected for the purpose two spots where the river hugs the east bank.

THE CROSSING OF THE ADHAIM. APRIL 18TH.

Before it was yet light the North Lancs. on the right waded over the river and, advancing rapidly, secured a foothold on the cliff opposite. The Turks were completely surprised. But the main attack was on the extreme left, where the South and East Lancs. waded across, and were followed by the 6th King's in boats. They also captured the cliff by surprise. The guns registered when it got light, and at 12.15 p.m., after an intense barrage, the infantry pushed on and captured the main position with 400 prisoners. By noon a bridge had been thrown and the 35th Brigade and Cassels' Cavalry, which had been demonstrating on the right flank, crossed by it. Sir William Marshall describes the scene as follows: "Cassels meanwhile had been dancing with impatience, and when at last the bridge was complete I said to him, 'Now you can go; pursue as far as the outskirts of Samarra and keep between the enemy and the river.'"* Cassels carried out his order with splendid dash, turning retreat into rout and capturing 800 prisoners. He advanced fourteen miles, and his guns obtained splendid targets. He rejoined the infantry at 11 p.m. on the Tigris four miles west of the Adhaim. The 52nd Division was practically annihilated, 1,250 prisoners being taken, while our casualties numbered a mere 73.

It was a brilliant and dashing victory, due largely to the careful arrangement made to effect surprise. The plan was simple but effective, and the co-operation of all arms contributed largely to the extent of the success. Marshall himself described it as "like a set piece at a field day."

NARRATIVE.

All was now ready for Cobbe's delayed attack, when once again the tiresome XIII Corps intervened. This time it was down the Adhaim. Screened by the friendly Jabal Hamrin, the 14th Division had moved round by Band-i-Adhaim, and was now advancing down the west bank. It was possible that the remainder of the Corps would make another irruption by the Khalis Canal, directed either on Cayley's or Marshall's forces. This diversion came at a most inopportune moment, and Maude must have wished he had secured the Jabal Hamrin before turning his attention to the XVIII Corps. The immediate problem was: Was he strong enough to hold off the new threat and at the same time let Cobbe's attack proceed?

* *Memories of Four Fronts*, p. 238.

Trusting again to his interior lines, and no doubt having his confidence raised by Marshall's new victory, he decided to continue with his plan. He merely ordered Cobbe to throw a bridge over the Tigris so as to connect up with Marshall and allow of reinforcements being transferred across the river from one to the other.

But action must be prompt, and Cobbe was asked to send in at once his plan of attack. This plan was duly approved, and on April 20th a preliminary advance was made in order to secure a good artillery position. A detachment also advanced without opposition up the east bank to the north of the Turkish position. Marshall expected to be asked to co-operate on that bank in the coming battle, but the only order he got was to send Cassels' brigade across to join Cobbe.

THE TURKISH POSITION AT ISTABULAT. (*Sketch Map* 3.)

The Turkish flank rested, as usual, upon the Tigris. It stretched south-west for two miles, crossing the Dujail Canal and the railway, and then turned back at right-angles for five miles.

Cobbe decided to attack this position at its left extremity to the north of the canal, and then exploit it to the south of the canal. The bulk of the artillery was to support the attack of the 21st Brigade north of the canal. The cavalry and armoured cars were to watch the left.

ISTABULAT. APRIL 21ST–22ND.

At dawn the Black Watch and Gurkhas attacked and captured two redoubts on the right. The Bhopals on the extreme right swung round to the left to assist this operation, but they passed at short range in front of a strong Turkish position and were mown down. To the south of the canal the 19th Brigade was echeloned in rear, ready to exploit the situation created by the 21st. The 28th and half 8th Brigades were in reserve. Soon after the capture of the redoubts the 19th captured 700 yards of the hostile position, but were then ordered to stop. Artillery was pushed forward to assist the 21st, who were hard put to it to hold their position against fierce counter-attacks. They decided that further advance was impossible until the 19th had taken another ridge in their front. Finally it was decided to postpone this attack till morn the following day. In the course of the battle Cassels' brigade arrived and was sent to the

left. Marshall also reported that his guns could help in the battle on the next day. But when day dawned on the 22nd it was found that the Turks had slipped away in the night—as usual.

On the 22nd the pursuit started at 5 a.m., the 28th Brigade leading. By 2 p.m. the enemy were located in a fresh position five miles south of Samarra station. This time Cobbe decided not to give the enemy the opportunity to escape in the night: they must be attacked *instanter*. Cassels was trying to get round the left, while Marshall's guns, ably handled by Colonel Peck, got in rear of the position on the eastern bank and on their own initiative bombarded it heavily.* At 4 p.m. the Leicesters attacked, supported by the 51st Sikhs and 56th Rifles. Sweeping forward irresistibly, they captured the position and 300 prisoners. Still driving on, they pursued the enemy for 1,200 yards and captured seven guns. But the Turk is never so dangerous as when he is in a tight place. Probably noticing that the Leicesters had got far ahead of their supporting troops, they launched a heavy counter-attack, and the Leicesters were pushed back and obliged to let go the guns, which remained in No Man's Land. By this time the whole of the 28th Brigade was in the line, and after an anxious time the 19th Brigade came up to their help. At the same time Cassels made a dashing diversion on the left, and a party of the 32nd Lancers charged a trench, from which they were driven back with a loss of 25 out of 40 men. Their bold action had, however, not been without its effect. The enemy was visibly shaken, and Cobbe ordered Fane to push forward *all* his troops. But by that time it was getting dark, and confusion arose from the mixture of units. As a result the attack died away. No further move was made till 3 a.m., when the 8th Brigade advanced—only to find that the enemy had once more slipped away in the night.

Samarra railway station and much rolling stock was captured and the pursuit continued for five miles. Next day our troops entered the ancient town of Samarra, the scene of the Emperor Julian's death, and of his legendary saying, "Vicisti, O Galileæ!"

Our casualties were 2,228, and those of the enemy about the same.

COMMENTS.

This was easily the most fiercely contested battle since the capture of Baghdad. It is impossible to withhold admiration

* Described by General Marshall as "A Gunner's Paradise" (*Memories of Four Fronts*, p. 240).

from the able manner in which Shefket, the Turkish commander, conducted the defence. He was a foeman worthy of our steel. But the battle was also memorable for the splendid fighting of the British troops. It was a great achievement. With approximately equal numbers, we had wrested from the enemy a carefully prepared position that he had every intention of holding through the summer. It was especially creditable to the Black Watch, Gurkhas, Leicesters and the Royal Artillery. In fact, one observer described it as "an artillery battle,"* for the Turkish guns were also at their best. Nor should we forget the resolute handling of the cavalry by Cassels, who was rapidly making a name for himself as a cavalry leader. The opportune intervention by Peck's guns on the east bank also contributed largely to the success.

It seems a pity that the attack of the 21st Brigade was stopped. It is easier to stop an attack than it is to start it again when it has once lost way. And it may very well be that if more troops had been put into the fight on the first day there might have been no necessity for a second day. A slightly greater casualty list on the first day might have lessened the ultimate losses. Only six out of fourteen and a half battalions were actively engaged on the 21st. This is rather typical of our attacks—not in this campaign alone.

The battle is also notable for the appearance of the new German "Halberstadts," to which we had for the moment no answer.

Marshall's Force.

While the battle of Istabulat was being fought the XIII Corps was steadily developing its offensive designs. They became so threatening that at 8 a.m. on the second day of the battle, the 22nd, Maude warned Marshall to be prepared to move that same evening a sufficient force to deal with the XIII Corps' advanced troops, which were reported near Tulul. Marshall asked for delay as his troops were scattered and he in any case wished (as he had done on the Khalis Canal) to draw the enemy on farther before attacking him. Maude acceded to this request. Meanwhile Marshall had called in from Baquba two battalions.

At this point the student is recommended to mark on Map B the situation on April 22nd. It can be summarised in terms of rifle strengths as follows :—

* *The Leicestershires Beyond Baghdad.*

On the Diyala Front.

2,300 Turks oppose 3,000 Russians.
1,200 Turks oppose 1,600 British at Tijdari, with another 1,200 from Sindiya to Diltawa.

On the Adhaim Front.

3,200 British at Tigris junction.
800 British six miles farther west (Thomson).
2,000 Turks at Tulul.
3,800 Turks at Adhaim, moving south.
1,200 Turks north of Band-i-Adhaim, also moving south.

By this it will appear that Ali Ihsan had good prospects of concentrating superior numbers against our force on the Adhaim, unless prompt action was taken either to draw troops rapidly from the Diyala, or else to attack the Tulul force before it could be reinforced.

This force will be referred to as Marshall's Force, in what follows, though Marshall was actually in command of all the troops on the east bank of the Tigris. He thus in a sense held two roles, as he had done in the Khalis operations, those of force commander and of corps commander. The old corps organisation that had been appropriate in the operations prior to the capture of Baghdad was too rigid to be suitable for the present scattered operations. Not only corps, but divisions and even brigades were now broken up. The only division that was fortunate to be still serving as an entity under its own divisional commander was the 7th.

NARRATIVE.

On April 23rd the Turks were reported as intending to halt at Tubul. Maude decided that as they would not come on he must go forward and attack them, just as had happened on the Khalis Canal. He therefore suggested the weakening of Line "A," which Marshall accordingly reduced to two battalions, and warned the 40th Brigade to be ready to march to the Adhaim at short notice. Thomson's force was also called to the Adhaim. It now seemed quite clear that the Turkish 14th Division, which was now near Dahuba, was awaiting the arrival of the 2nd Division before advancing farther, and Marshall made the following plan to defeat it next day, before the 2nd Division would have time to join it.

Half of the 37th Brigade was to remain defending the bridgehead at Barura; the remainder of his force was to advance at 2 a.m. on the 24th and make a night approach march to the Dahuba position, while Thomson with half the 35th Brigade was to march from his position six miles west of the Barura Peninsula in a north-easterly direction against the Turkish right flank; and the 7th Cavalry Brigade was to envelop the enemy's right rear and prevent reinforcements joining it. It was a bold and difficult plan, but Marshall had confidence in his troops, which were now fighting under his own eye, and he hoped that his good fortune at the crossing of the Adhaim would hold.

At dawn on April 24th Marshall's main force obtained contact with the hostile position; but Thomson's orders arrived late, and the position of the Turkish 14th Division had been incorrectly located. However, Thomson adopted the course of marching boldly to the sound of the guns instead of merely sending out patrols or applying for further orders. He took the initiative also in sending some of his infantry forward in Ford vans to support the cavalry who had got completely in rear of the 14th Division, but were in danger of being squeezed between it and the 2nd Division, which was now advancing to its aid. At 9.30 a.m., however, the 38th Brigade captured the position, and the 14th Division started to retire. Till then it had no knowledge of the presence of our cavalry in its rear, and was surprised in close order by the ever-watchful "V" Battery. But a nasty situation was developing for our cavalry, for the 2nd Division was now coming on fast and a section of "V" had to be swung round on to the new enemy. It was high time to get out of it if they were not to be crushed between the two Turkish divisions, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade accordingly drew off to the west, having captured 80 prisoners and done well. But the shelling of "V" had had a decisive and unexpected result, for the whole of the 14th Division, believing its retreat cut off, and not being aware of the near approach of its comrades, changed direction left and forded the Adhaim. This is a striking example of what a big effect a few shells, timely placed, can have on the course of operations. The removal of the cavalry from between the victorious Marshall's force and the oncoming Turkish 2nd Division had the effect of drawing up the curtain and disclosing the two antagonists face to face. What would happen? Would the Turks continue to come on? Would Marshall advance to attack them? Or would he pursue the 14th Division across the river? None of

these things happened. Both sides halted and the battle came to an abrupt end—like two dogs that suddenly stop fighting and stand looking at one another, with their tongues out.

The explanation is a simple one—heat and exhaustion, combined with the fact that it would obviously be better to let the 2nd Division come on and attack if it wished to. Also Marshall was now in the presence of superior numbers, and it behoved him to act warily. He therefore sat down and watched. And so did the Turks. That situation had arisen in which neither side advances, a situation that General D'Ordel is at such pains to deal with in his famous treatise on "Tactics." The inaction on the part of Ali Ihsan was also understandable, in the face of the defeat of his 14th Division.

During the day Marshall received a number of messages and suggestions from the Army Commander, including two hints that he should reduce the Diyala force. Maude also offered to transfer the 8th Brigade to the east bank. He ended with the usual injunction to press the enemy vigorously "and hold him to his ground." As a result, the 40th Brigade was ordered to relieve half the 37th at Barura.

Though Maude was anxious for an early pursuit, Marshall did not find it practicable to start till 9.30 a.m. on the 25th. His force then marched to Tulul without opposition; the Turks, as ever, had slipped away in the night. On April 26th the pursuit was continued to Sat-ha, while the 40th reached Dahuba. The Turks were now located preparing a position at Adhaim. On April 27th and 28th Marshall closed up to his position, and on the 29th the artillery registered it, with aeroplane observation; the 40th joined the force, and preparations were made to attack next day.

ADHAIM. APRIL 30TH. (*Sketch Map* 4.)

The Turkish position was astride the river through the village of Adhaim, and extended for about two miles on each bank, the flanks being refused. The 2nd Division was on the west, the 14th on the east. The valley is here about one and a half miles wide, and the banks are 40 feet high. Marshall had thirteen battalions at his disposal. He had granted leave to large numbers of his troops, but they had not yet departed. Though so doing would place his infantry in a numerical inferiority, he refused to make use of these men in the ensuing battle, a supreme gesture of confidence which was not lost upon his

troops. Thus he pitted 5,200 rifles against 6,000 in an entrenched position. Was this over-confidence? The event would show. He decided to take full advantage of his superior artillery—64 guns versus 39; also to take advantage of the fact that the hostile army was divided into two portions by the river by concentrating on the weakest portion first with superior numbers, and after defeating that to transfer his troops to the west bank and turn on the stronger 2nd Division. This must be adjudged a masterly method of overcoming his inferiority. Accordingly the 38th and 40th Brigades, the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the bulk of the guns were concentrated secretly on the east bank by dawn, and the 35th was left to contain the 2nd Division on the west bank. The 38th attacked on the right and the 40th on the left, with its left on the river; while the cavalry (reduced to one regiment and, owing to biliary fever, only 150 sabres strong) went round the hostile left flank.

The infantry advanced at dawn, preceded by a very intense barrage, the dust of which screened their movements and enabled them to capture the enemy's first line without much difficulty. In the 40th Brigade the Cheshires were on the left and the South Wales Borderers on the right. The Cheshires pushed straight on as far as the river bank without orders, capturing both lines and the village and several hundred prisoners; they had lost their C.O., and his place was taken by a captain from the Machine Gun Corps. A dust-storm now arose and lasted for over two hours, preventing artillery co-operation and rendering the situation obscure, especially as to the fate of the Cheshires. The South Wales Borderers had also pushed on beyond the first line and past the village. "B" and "C" Companies then faced half-right to meet a counter-attack that was threatening, while "A" and "D" went off half-left in an attempt to capture some guns that were invitingly close. But their ammunition failed, no supports reached them, the counter-attack was a strong one, and "B" and "C" Companies were gradually driven back. This entailed "A" and "D" Companies being cut off, as also the Cheshires. The men tried to effect their retreat, but a large number of both battalions were unsuccessful. The remaining battalions of the 40th Brigade were sent up, but arrived too late to save their comrades, though they succeeded in retaking the village. Meanwhile the 38th had also captured its first objective easily; it turned out to be only an advanced position. A low line of mounds then hid them from the 40th, and instead of continuing their advance

they proceeded to dig in. Orders for a further advance were given, but were cancelled, although the Turks' 2nd Division could be seen retiring during most of the day. The fringe of the Turkish counter-attack on the 40th Brigade passed across the front of the 38th Brigade at about 1,000 yards' distance, but escaped detection.

The dust-storm had favoured the Turks. Ali Ihsan was, as has been hinted, a redoubtable antagonist, never so dangerous as when things were going badly for him. He saw the disaster that was overtaking his 14th Division, and though the 35th was attacking his 2nd Division, he did not hesitate to send the whole of his reserves across the river in a wide-sweeping counter-attack. It was this attack that, favoured by the dust-storm, proved so successful against the South Wales Borderers and Cheshires. It was a bold conception, finely executed. In spite of the obscurity of the dust-storm, it managed to strike home at exactly the right spot.

Meanwhile the attack of the 35th on the "Boot," as their objective was called, failed, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which had reached an ideal position from which to intercept the Turkish retreat, was driven back by the retreating guns and infantry of the 2nd Division. Those of the Turks who had not yet retired slipped away during the night, as Maude had intelligence that they would do. But it was not his intention to pursue them into the Jabal Hamrin, and Marshall received orders to revert to the defensive.

COMMENTS.

The upshot of the battle was satisfactory: a superior force had retired from in front of an inferior one. But it diminishes our satisfaction when we reflect that the Turks intended to retire whether we attacked or not, and they had taken away with them 150 Englishmen as prisoners, an unusual occurrence in this campaign.

The disaster to the Cheshires and South Wales Borderers has been attributed to two causes: (1) To the Cheshires going too far forward; (2) to the dust-storm. Is either of these reasons really satisfying? It certainly seems a bit hard on the Cheshires. In spite of the early loss of their C.O., they had gone forward with great dash; they had captured the commander of the 42nd Regiment and two of his battalion commanders, and had evidently put the 14th Division into a state of extreme turmoil and confusion. This had been done by applying the great

principle of surprise. Had they halted, as was the intention, on the first line the Turks would have had time to recover from their surprise, and it is unlikely that the local commander would have been captured. If supports had followed them up closely the counter-attack would scarcely have been successful. Does it ever pay to prevent infantry going forward if they have the will and the ability to do so, provided supports are available? No less than six times in under six weeks our infantry had been prevented under such conditions, the 28th at Mushahida, 40th at Duqma, 39th at Khalis Canal, 38th at crossing of the Adhaim, and 19th at Istabulat; yet in none of these cases was any good purpose served, and in some of them a big opportunity was probably lost. If the supporting troops are kept so close up that they can maintain touch with the front troops, automatically following them up when necessary in order to do so instead of waiting for orders, a disaster such as this, where two battalions were being cut up while their comrades were placidly sitting down in rear, could scarcely occur. Rather, in this case, the disaster would have occurred to the Turks, whose guns were on the point of being captured at one time. (Compare the similar situation of the Turkish guns at Istabulat.)

Then if the 38th had gone straight forward, not stopping to worry about how the troops were faring on their left, things would have gone better. The troops on their left were either doing well or they were doing badly. If they were doing well and advancing, there would be no point in stopping their own advance; while if they were doing badly, the best way to help them in their difficulty would be for the 38th to go on ahead themselves, thus turning the enemy opposing the 40th, or at least reducing the pressure on them. In other words, the right watchword seems to be in the case of both brigades: "Boutez en avant!" Boost forward!

Then as to the dust-storm. Admittedly it handicapped our guns; but as regards the infantry, it could have helped ours in the same way that it helped the Turks. If their reserves could move in it and bring off their attack at exactly the right spot, surely our infantry could have done the same? What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander (though Ali Ihsan was far from being a goose).

The rough-and-ready rule in the attack seems to be "When in doubt go forward"; which is a feeble echo of Nelson's classic instruction to his captains before Trafalgar, that if any of them should find themselves without orders they could not be wrong

in placing their ships alongside an enemy. If that precept had been observed here, the battle of Adhaim would probably have been for us a brilliant victory instead of being one of Sir William Marshall's least satisfactory engagements.

Nevertheless, the orders were explicit to halt on the first line, and had both battalions done so, and had no dust-storm arisen, the eventual Turkish retirement across the front would have been heavily punished. This appears to have been the essence of Marshall's plan.

On the Turkish side, the irrepressible XIII Corps had reason to be pleased. Owing to its control of the Jabal Hamrin it had been somewhat of a thorn in our side for over a month, and it still controlled the passes, and still lived to fight another day. It was doubtless only the advent of the hot weather that disposed Maude to leave Ali Ihsan in possession of the ridge through the summer. The Turkish commander's bold and resolute action in promptly throwing his whole reserve across the river in a counter-attack is also to be admired. It is in keeping with the great Kemal's actions in Gallipoli.

Yet no military operations can be expected to be entirely free from mistakes in execution, and this one will stand comparison with most. By skilful utilisation of interior lines Sir Stanley Maude had driven the two Turkish army corps apart and had captured over 3,000 prisoners. The six weeks' fighting is well summed up in his own words—almost the last he ever penned :—

" The enemy's XIII and XVIII Corps had been driven back on divergent lines. . . . The XIII Corps had twice taken the offensive, with results disastrous to itself, and the XVIII Corps had been defeated and driven from its selected positions on four occasions. . . . The objectives which we had set out to reach had been secured, and the spirit of the enemy's troops was broken. The fighting carried out during this month had imposed a severe strain upon the troops, for the heat, the constant dust-storms and the absence of water on occasions tested their stamina very highly. But as conditions became more trying, the spirit of the troops seemed to rise, and at the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of discipline, gallantry in action and endurance which had been so noticeable throughout the army during the operations that led to the fall of Baghdad and subsequently." Notice the omission of the first personal pronoun, so typical of the great Army Commander.

CHAPTER VII

Summer, 1917.

DURING the month of May both sides, reversing the ancient usage, went into summer quarters. They had good reason for so doing, for it was the hottest summer within the memory of man. During this period the III Corps held the line Baquba–Sindiya, and the I Corps the line Samarra–Baghdad, also Falluja. The 15th Division was at Baghdad. Military activity was confined to punitive expeditions against marauding and disaffected Arabs, but there was much administrative activity—in particular the construction of roads, bridges and railways. By the end of July the Kut–Baghdad railway and the Baghdad–Baquba railways were finished, and the Basra–Qurna broad-gauge line was under construction. The amenities of the troops were improved, and much barren land was irrigated and placed under cultivation once more.

Relations between the Army authorities and the Civil Administration (represented by Sir Percy Cox, the Civil Commissioner) were not entirely happy. The civilians complained that the army commander tended to ignore the Arabs, who thus were constantly causing trouble, with the result that large numbers of troops had to be " locked up " on the lines of communication. During Sir William Marshall's regime all source of friction happily disappeared.

As time went on the Russian situation gave increasing cause for anxiety. By the end of May only sixteen squadrons and five battalions remained at Qizil Ribat, the remainder having withdrawn into Persia. Any further advance by us on Mosul was contingent on Russian co-operation ; but after the collapse of General Brusiloff's offensive in July all hope of this was extinguished.

During the summer an increasing number of indications pointed to the probability of a big Turkish offensive for the recapture of Baghdad. It seemed likely that this attack would be based on Aleppo and would advance by the line of the Euphrates. It was also calculated that Turkey would be able

to concentrate against us in this theatre by the end of September 96,000 rifles. Against this only 75,000 British rifles were immediately available in the Baghdad area, and there were, in addition, about 30,000 Russians in Persia. The British Government had been for some time desirous of reducing the size of our army in Mesopotamia, but this threat made it impossible to do so. In fact, when it became quite clear in September that no further reliance could be placed upon the Russians, Maude asked for reinforcements. It was eventually decided to send him the new 18th Indian Division early in 1918.

Meanwhile, several additions to his strength had already been made. The 17th Division was being formed; the 11th Cavalry Brigade was on its way from India; a second squadron of the R.F.C. was arriving; and a big addition had been made to the mechanical transport, chiefly in the shape of Ford vans. As the result of all this our fighting strength had risen to 166,000 by the end of September, with a ration strength of well over a quarter of a million. Seeing that our rôle, owing to the defection of Russia, was now a purely defensive one, Sir William Robertson did not wish to lock up any more troops than were absolutely necessary in Mesopotamia. He had always looked upon the campaign as a regrettable "sideshow." But for the moment there seemed no prospect of reducing the size of the army.

We must now go over to the Turkish side and see how much substance there was in this fear of a Turkish offensive. In April, 1917, the Germans had agreed to accept responsibility for an attack on Baghdad. A Turco-German army, known as "Yilderim," under the command of General von Falkenhayn, and consisting of the Sixth Army and a new Seventh Army, was to assemble in the Aleppo area. The main attack was to come down the Euphrates, and was to strike the British in flank and rear. Preparations were put in hand, roads built, flat-bottomed boats collected, depots formed along the road, etc. But progress was slow, and considerable friction was engendered between the Turks and Germans.

The only operation of note attempted by Sir Stanley Maude during the summer months was directed against the Turks' advanced detachment on the Euphrates at Ramadi. Though most carefully planned, the operation ended in failure for the simple reason that the excessive heat almost literally shrivelled it up. The shade temperature at Baghdad on the day of the attempt was 122 degrees, and Maude at the last moment pro-

posed postponing the operation, but the local commander asked, and was allowed, to carry on. But Maude's fears proved to have been justified.

Meanwhile the strategical situation was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory, and it distressed the Army Commander to have to ask for reinforcements at a time when he was confined to a defensive role, and when the enemy on his front was for the moment so feeble. It was only a partial answer that his force acted as a defence to India—in fact, Sir Arnold Wilson in his *Loyalties*, says that "it is difficult to take this argument seriously."*

It may be asked: What was to prevent him advancing on Mosul without the co-operation of the Russians? The answer is that such a move would require more railways and transport than Maude had at his disposal. It must be remembered that India was still providing the bulk of his stores, and was short herself. Already she was having to tear up existing railways to meet his demands, and the Indian Government was becoming restive. The student may wonder how it was that we required the help of a railway and a navigable river while the Turks had neither of these advantages. It is again only a partial answer to say that we conducted operations and lived on a more lavish scale than our opponents.

The very size of our force added to our difficulties, for the enormous administrative side had to be clothed and fed just as much as those it ministered to. Much the same thing was happening in Palestine, where the very size of our cavalry force clogged and complicated its movements. So the python that, to quote Liddell Hart's apt simile, was wriggling along the desert eating up the Turkish right leg, had perforce to suspend its prandial progress till a more convenient season.

What made the situation the more exasperating was the possibility that "Yilderim," or the bulk of it, might be employed after all, not in Mesopotamia but in Palestine. It has already been pointed out that Turkey possessed the inestimable advantage of strategical interior lines. From her central point at Aleppo she could (when her preparations had been made) throw her reserve against our forces in either Mesopotamia or Palestine quicker than we could counter the blow, either by transferring troops from the one theatre to the other or by reinforcing either theatre from India. Thus an adequate force must be maintained in Mesopotamia to meet all eventualities. We could not advance

* *Op. cit.*, p. 270.

materially and we would not retire. We were reduced to sitting and waiting, swallowing as best we could the insult that our army formed an excellent internment camp for the enemy. But if the situation was bound to remain fundamentally unsatisfactory it could be to some extent ameliorated, and how Sir Stanley Maude set about to accomplish this we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

Ramadi.

(*Sketch Map* 5.)

LOOKING round for an enemy to strike it appeared to General Maude that the most effective blow should be directed against Ramadi once more. But there were difficulties. Since the abortive attempt against it in July its garrison had been reinforced and strengthened, and the chance of effecting a second surprise was reduced. However, he determined to make the attempt, and committed the task to General Brooking, the commander of the 15th Division. Together they concocted a plan.

This plan was based on the recognition of the fact that it would be impossible to disguise entirely that an operation was intended, for elaborate arrangements must be made, roads and bridges repaired, and supplies and transport accumulated. They therefore concentrated on deceiving the enemy as to the exact point of attack. After careful aeroplane reconnaissance, Brooking came to the conclusion that the Turks believed an attack against their southern flank was impracticable. It would involve a wide flanking march away from the river, and one likely to be impeded by the Habbaniya Salt Lake. Brooking decided to overcome these difficulties and attack the southern front, while inducing the enemy to believe he was going to direct his attack along the line of the river. To this end he constructed a dummy bridge over the Euphrates and started a road from it along the north bank. Camps were laid out along the river, active cavalry reconnaissance was carried out on the north bank, while all the real reconnaissance was done by air*; supplies were collected by friendly Arabs on the north bank; and finally, when the orders were issued, they did not give the whole plan.

In spite of all this the prospects of success did not appear promising and on September 24th the Army Commander

* The country was photographed and a map issued corrected up to September 27th—exceedingly smart work on the part of the R.F.C.

suggested that it might be better to take up a position on each side of the river and await events. But Brooking had confidence in his plan and in his men, and on the 26th his troops were concentrated eight miles from the hostile position with outposts four miles in front. So great was his secrecy that on the same day the Army Commander, who gave Brooking a freer hand than he gave to some other generals, inquired for the plan and date of the proposed attack. Next day, the 27th, he approved of the plan and the same evening Brooking proceeded to carry it out.

It had involved an exceptional amount of preparation. Supply and transport proved the chief difficulty; this was solved by the provision of a large number of lorries, Ford vans and cars. Even so, it was calculated that the force must be limited to two infantry brigades, the 12th and 42nd, of the 15th Division, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, and one armoured car battery. Water was carried for the troops in Ford vans also. We could thus only muster 6,000 rifles, against about 3,500 of the enemy.

The Turkish position (see Sketch Map 5) formed a semicircle round the eastern and southern sides of Ramadi. The Habbaniya Canal also covered the eastern side, and a mile in front of it was the Mushaid Ridge, believed to be weakly held. The water in the Habbaniya Lake was salt.

The first operation (the only one to be mentioned in orders) was the capture of the Mushaid Ridge. But as soon as this had been effected and the Turkish attention drawn in this direction, it was Brooking's intention to switch his whole force sharply to its left, covered from view by the Mushaid Ridge, and attack the southern face of the position while the cavalry made a detour right round to the west with the intention of cutting off the Turkish retreat. General Brooking aimed at capturing or destroying the whole hostile force—a high aim.

Battle of Ramadi, September 28th.

The two infantry brigades approached the hostile position under cover of darkness, the 12th on the right and the 42nd on the left, with the 6th Cavalry Brigade on the extreme right. But the 12th eventually fell back into second line and the 42nd went on alone to assault the southern end of the Mushaid Ridge at dawn. As they approached, however, they found it to be unoccupied, and took possession of it with but slight loss from artillery fire at 7 a.m.

The first phase had gone according to plan. The 42nd now received orders to side-step to their left, cross the dam over the canal and capture Double and Middle Hills, supported by the 12th, and the cavalry were ordered to cross the dam and get round the enemy's rear and cut off his retreat. The cavalry duly crossed the dam and pushed on into the blue, where we will leave them for the time being. But the 42nd suggested that as they were very scattered the 12th should lead the new attack. The force commander agreed to this, but in the meantime the 42nd had moved off and, finding that the 12th was two miles in rear, they carried on with the attack as originally ordered. A battalion each captured Middle and Double Hills at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. respectively without difficulty, followed by all the field artillery. The 42nd was ordered to push on and capture the Ramadi and Aziziya Ridges, but shortly afterwards the order was changed to the Ramadi Ridge only and the 12th was ordered to capture Aziziya Ridge.

At 1.30 the 42nd obtained a footing on Ramadi Ridge, but received the concentrated fire of all the Turks within range and suffered heavily. This was scarcely surprising, for the attack was an isolated one, the 12th being some three miles in rear on the receipt of the order, and our vastly superior artillery did not succeed in silencing the hostile guns. Just two hours later the 12th captured Aziziya Ridge with fewer casualties, though they were troubled by oblique fire from in front of the 42nd. The latter had been having an uncomfortable time (though they had succeeded in getting three battalions into line), and at about this time they were seen trickling gradually off the hill back to Middle Hill. This brigade was by now very exhausted and took a somewhat despondent view of the situation and asked for reinforcements. But both brigades were now in the line and the force commander had scarcely any reserves at his disposal. Nevertheless he sent the brigade a cheery reply, bidding them hold on and dig in.* He followed it up with a message to the cavalry that their intervention in the battle was urgently required. We must now follow the fortunes of that arm.

The cavalry brigade had seized and crossed the dam without difficulty. On reaching the Aziziya Canal at about 9.30 they found it dry except for a few pools, where some of the horses

* Reminiscent of Ian Hamilton's reply to the Anzacs on the evening of their landing in Gallipoli: "Dig, dig, dig!"

were watered, but the bottom was boggy and a ramp and bridge had to be constructed. It was therefore 12.30 when they were able to move on. Making a wide sweep to the west and then north, they succeeded in reaching the river three miles in rear of Ramadi by 4 p.m. *En route* they were sent a message that it was essential they should seize the bridge over the Aziziya Canal just west of Ramadi and shell the enemy. But they did not move forward from the position they had occupied at 4 p.m. Brooking's second message, calling for their active co-operation, now arrived. It stipulated that their guns should shell the hostile position. But this was beyond the effective range of "V's" 13-pounders, and as the Brigade still did not advance any farther "V" Battery was unable to comply with the order. The reason why the cavalry had been able to reach the hostile rear with so little opposition was that a force of 1,000 Turks, who were dispatched to engage them, were recalled as soon as the attack on Ramadi Ridge developed.

As dusk fell the senior officer—a battalion commander—on Middle Hill organised a defensive line for the night, and any troops that were still in advance of the hill fell back to it. But the 12th held on to Aziziya Ridge during the night, though their position was not free from anxiety, for they were isolated and out of touch with the 42nd, whose situation on Middle Hill was unknown to the foremost troops till the morning. The night passed quietly, however, with the infantry. Not so in the case of the cavalry. At 3 a.m. they were attacked. A standing patrol gave the alarm and skilfully led the enemy into an ambush. A heavy fire of machine guns and rifles at short range practically settled the matter, though the fighting went on for some time. "V" (helped by the light of the moon) shelled and sunk a barge on the river from which two guns were firing. This was at a range of 3,600 yards, a remarkable achievement for a night action.

At dawn on September 29th the 12th Brigade, pursuant to order, advanced on their left, captured the northern end of Aziziya Ridge and the western end of Shaikh Faraja Ridge. In doing so they suffered a good deal from fire coming from their right, for the 42nd was not as yet moving. Portions of three battalions found themselves mixed up on this ridge. Their ultimate objective was the bridge. By an admirable exercise of initiative Captain Rodgerson of the 2nd/39th Garhwalis, taking with him portions of his own regiment, of the Queen's and of the 90th Punjabis, charged forward to the bridge and seized it.

Not content with this, he pushed on 300 yards beyond the bridge and captured a battery of three guns that was firing at his party (reduced by now to 500) at point-blank range. This happened at 7.30, and was invisible to brigade headquarters which, half an hour later, described the situation as one of great anxiety. Rodgerson's party was isolated and unsupported, and here also anxiety reigned. There were indeed ideas of withdrawing altogether; but all these forebodings were unnecessary, for at 9.15 the white flag went up and the Turks came out and surrendered to Rodgerson's gallant party.

It was not until 9.30 that the 42nd received the order to advance, and directly they did so the white flag went up on their front also. By 11 a.m. the entire Turkish force had surrendered—3,500 and 35 guns. Our casualties were under 1,000.

COMMENTS.

Ramadi was one of the most clean-cut victories of the war. Brooking's conception and organisation of it was masterly. To his own cheerful driving force the success was largely due. Unlike so many British commanders he dared to keep only the smallest reserve in his own hands. Practically the whole of his two infantry brigades were engaged before nightfall on the first day of the battle. Yet his serene optimism did not fail him then, and the high aim he had set himself was eventually achieved. It may therefore seem ungracious to criticise any small points, yet the student should observe how the effect of making the attacks on the two ridges at different times, and unco-ordinated, entailed a concentration of hostile fire on each in turn. If there was no time for the 42nd to await the attack on Aziziya Ridge it might have been better to let the original order stand—namely, for the 42nd to attack both ridges. As for the cavalry, the only criticism that is possible is that they did not intervene (as ordered) in the battle on the afternoon of the 28th. On the other hand their non-intervention had no ill effects, so far as it is possible to judge, and it may even be that their abstention contributed to the magnitude of the victory. It is not clear, however, why they did not follow up their night success by closing in on Ramadi at dawn.

Captain Rodgerson's timely initiative can scarcely be too highly praised. The despondency shown in some quarters on the evening of the 28th was nothing to be wondered at. It was merely that natural abatement of mental and physical powers that

generally supervenes at the close of a long-drawn-out fight. Fortunately for the issue the force commander was immune to it.

Minor factors that contributed towards the success were the assistance rendered to the cavalry by the Air, nd, above all, by the provision of Ford vans for the supply of water.

The action of the Turks appears somewhat supine, but the truth is that they had been thoroughly surprised and outmanœuvred ; and what adds to our credit is that the two sides were more equal numerically than was the case in many battles of this campaign. The battle had the effect of making the Turks more wary than ever. As Candler puts it : " It afterwards became all the difference between walking up partridges in the first week of September and at the end of the season."*

Maude was anxious for a raid on Hit, thirty-two miles farther up the river, and the advanced depot for the " Yilderim " attack. This was attempted two days after the battle, but owing to the delay it did not achieve anything. The extensive capture of stores at Ramadi was in itself enough to put a check on the " Yilderim " offensive, had not that offensive already been abandoned. According to Larcher† the decision to abandon it, though officially announced in September, had actually been come to in the summer. The Turkish 50th Division was now brought down to Hit to block any further advance on our part.

But Maude was already looking elsewhere.

* *The Long Road to Baghdad*, ii, 236.

† *La Guerre Turque*, p. 351.

CHAPTER IX

Jabal Hamrin II—Daur—Tikrit.

As a preliminary to his next step, General Maude occupied Mandali, to the south-east of the Jabal Hamrin. This was a fertile region and the Turks had been largely dependent on it for their supplies. Being now deprived of this, they fell back across the Diyala. The only surprise is that we allowed them to profit by it for so long.

A light railway had by now been constructed as far as Shahraban, and everything was ready for Maude's next step. The object of the new operation was to establish control of the eastern end of the Jabal Hamrin, in order to deny the enemy its use as a screen for hostile movements, and also to obtain control of the mouths of the various canals fed by the Diyala. Three parallel columns advanced on the line Chahriz (fifteen miles east of Shahraban)–Delli Abbas, which was reached on October 18th. The operation lacks interest, because we outnumbered the enemy by four to one (16,000 to 4,000) and because the Turks had orders to retire before us. Except for our left flank there was practically no opposition, and by the 20th we had reached the desired line. This line included the eastern end of the ridge up to the gorge made by the Diyala, and then bent back to Delli Abbas. Our only chance of making any appreciable captures was on the left, where the 38th Brigade of the 13th Division, meeting with slight opposition, decided to defer its attack till dark. When dark came it was again deferred till daybreak. At daybreak the Turks had slipped away. This had by now become an old Turkish custom, but it seems never to have failed to surprise us. Candler sums up the operation in the following sentence : " We had set a Nasmyth hammer in motion to crush a grasshopper." But provided we had sufficient troops to apply overwhelming force without endangering other fronts, and without sacrificing speed and mobility to mere bulk, there was every justification for such a concentration. And this proviso obtained : we had ample troops without denuding other fronts. The Turks evidently believed we had

not, for a happy, if unforeseen, result of the operation was that the XVIII Corps moved forward from Tikrit on October 22nd with the object of easing the situation on the Diyala front. It was, however, a half-hearted effort, and upon the first sign of a counter-offensive by the 1st Corps the Turks fell back. Maude was evidently prepared for this, and consequently urged Cobbe to attack on the 23rd. But the latter delayed twenty-four hours, and when the 7th Division moved forward on the morning of the 24th it was found that the Turks had slipped away in the night.

But they did not go entirely back to Tikrit, the 51st Division (4,000 rifles strong) stopping at Daur, twelve miles to the south. Maude, quick to see his opportunity, decided to spring upon this isolated force before it could be supported. General Cobbe was placed in command of the operation. He had at his disposal his own 7th Division, the 8th Brigade, and the Cavalry Division, including eight armoured cars. Total, in round numbers, 3,500 sabres, 11,000 rifles. Not counting the 9th Brigade, which was in reserve at Samarra, he had a superiority of rather under three to one. The enemy was also believed to have a reserve at Auja, five miles north of Daur. Cobbe hoped to pounce on the Daur force before it could be supported from Auja.

ACTION OF DAUR, NOVEMBER 2ND. (*Sketch Map* 6.)

The Turkish position took the form of two irregular lines, for the most part two miles apart. The front line formed a sharp salient, with its left bank on the river. Cobbe decided to adopt his successful Mushahida tactics; that is, not to attempt to cover the whole front, but to concentrate like a spearhead against his selected point. This point was on the right centre of the hostile line. The 28th was to attack this, supported by the 19th, with the 8th in reserve. The 21st was to move up the eastern bank and co-operate with the attack by shell fire. The orders for the Cavalry Division should be studied closely. It, like the rest of the force, was to approach the position in the usual manner—namely, under cover of darkness; at 4 a.m. it was to be about three miles west of the western end of the Turkish line, whence it was to advance and shell the enemy's camps. It was to surprise the enemy and press vigorously any success it might obtain; at the same time it was to protect its own left flank from any opponents who might come down upon it from the north. In this connection it should be kept in the forefront of the mind that the object of the force as a

whole was to " destroy " the force at Daur before it could be reinforced.

The night approach was uneventful, and at dawn the 28th attacked and captured without much difficulty both first and second lines. The latter was in our hands by 9.30, at which hour artillery observers saw the enemy streaming away to the rear. Very few of them had as yet been captured, and casualties on both sides had been slight. The advance of the infantry was then stayed. Any hope of cutting off the retreating enemy or destroying them now devolved upon the cavalry and guns.

We must now trace out the fortunes of the Cavalry Division. It advanced on a compass bearing, apparently correctly, till about 4 a.m., when its Divisional Commander, believing it was too far to the right, inclined a mile to the left. The Division then halted till daylight. It was thus somewhat behind its time and right position.

Operations in the half-light are always difficult to ascertain and describe with precision, but it seems that the 6th Cavalry Brigade, which had orders to surprise the hostile camp, came in contact with the extreme right flank of the position at about 7 a.m. while the infantry attack was in full swing. The 13th Lancers of the 7th Brigade had orders to protect the left flank of the 6th Brigade; but, mistaking their way, they pushed out to the right instead of to the left and consequently bumped up against the main position and received a heavy fire at short range. The attack of the 6th Brigade did not make headway. It was driven off by gunfire, in the face of which it drew off to its left. It then attempted to get round the enemy's rear, and at 9 a.m. was approximately in the position shown in Sketch Map 6. At this moment, or shortly afterwards, as we know, the Turks were streaming away to the rear, across the front of our cavalry. It is passing strange that none of the cavalry, nor of the armoured cars attached to them, noticed this retreat of the enemy across their front. The armoured cars did nothing of note in the battle.

Meanwhile the remainder of the Cavalry Division was stationary, in spite of three messages sent by I Corps, stating that the infantry had surprised the enemy, and urging it to push on rapidly behind the hostile second line, in order to exploit the success. The Cavalry Division had been allotted a field battery in addition to " V "; and it might have been supposed that even if the cavalry could not get into the enemy their guns might do some execution. But " V " only fired three rounds

that day, and, incredible as it may seem, the field battery remained in reserve all day and did not fire a round. Only the leading regiment of the 6th Brigade was engaged with the enemy; the rest of the Division did nothing. By 11 a.m., when the golden opportunity had passed, the 6th Brigade engaged the enemy rearguard near Auja. But again gunfire decided them not to get to close quarters. In the afternoon preparations were put in hand for the cavalry to attack Auja, assisted by the 7th Divisional guns; but it was cancelled, and the cavalry went into bivouac. They had been told to act with vigour; they had not done so, and the consequence was that they were of no practical assistance to their side during the battle. The reproaches that had been so freely levelled at the cavalry arm in the early days of the campaign had become a thing of the past, and the brigades had each shown, when acting separately, that they could display considerable dash and vigour. It is curious that when acting as a complete division they should appear to shed their new-found vigour. When troops suffer heavy casualties, any criticism of failure to carry out their orders comes with a bad grace; but such was not the case here. Accounts seem to agree that it was gun fire, not rifle fire, which held up the cavalry. The Turks were credited with twenty guns, a proportion of which were engaged with the infantry. For the remainder to hold up a cavalry division, in spite of the fact that they had themselves to retire during the operations, implies a very fine achievement on the part of the Turkish gunners. But the acid test is the number of casualties inflicted, and the maximum that the Turkish gunners can claim is *four*, the remaining eleven casualties in the Cavalry Division being incurred by the 13th Lancers in their abortive encounter with the hostile front line. The cavalry is, however, entitled to the argument that, considering the object was the total destruction of the enemy, more explicit instructions might have been issued to get in rear of them and cut off their retreat.

The only other comment on this most disappointing action is that only one out of four infantry brigades was engaged. The force can scarcely be said to have acted like a Nasmyth hammer, though the Turkish garrison certainly partook of the agility of a grasshopper.

During the next twenty-four hours G.H.Q. displayed a certain vacillation, which resulted in a number of counter-orders. It could not come to a final decision as to whether Tikrit, which contained a large depot of stores, should be

attacked. This vacillation was due to the receipt of varying reports as to the position and intentions of the enemy. According to Sir Arnold Wilson,* the source of information on this occasion was the Turkish wireless which we had managed to decipher. There is no need to treat of the matter further; suffice it to say that orders were eventually issued to attack the Turkish position at Tikrit at dawn on November 5th. Thus closed what must have been a very trying forty-eight hours for the staff of the I Corps.

THE BATTLE OF TIKRIT. NOVEMBER 5TH. (*Sketch Map* 6.)

The Tikrit position was much stronger than the Daur one. As usual, its left rested on the river, and the right was refused. Altogether the position was six miles long, and in most places the line was double or treble. It was, in fact, a maze of trenches. Maude's suggestion was that the cavalry should outflank the position while the infantry attacked it in front. But Cobbe had evidently lost faith in the ability of the cavalry to carry out such a task. He pointedly remarked that any shelling compelled them to keep wide of the enemy, and that it must use mounted action and be prepared to suffer loss if it was to do any good. He presumably doubted the likelihood of its doing this, for he confined it to the role of watching the right of the hostile line, with the object of holding the enemy to his ground while the infantry attacked, and watching for any opportunity afforded by their success. The 8th Brigade was to attack in the centre. As always, Cobbe concentrated his infantry against the decisive point, ignoring completely the hostile left of the line where the ground was broken and where the enemy might consequently expect attack. The 21st was to follow up on the other side of the river, and engage the enemy with long-range fire from a position four miles east of Tikrit. The 28th was in reserve and the 9th was brought up to Auja as an additional reserve.

The usual night approach was made, and as soon as it was ascertained that the enemy was holding the position in strength an attack was mounted by the 8th, supported by a strong barrage by the guns. It took considerable time, however, for the guns to register, so that the attack could not be launched till 11.30 a.m. But such was the accuracy of the barrage, and so great was the curtain of dust thrown up, that the infantry penetrated the first line without undue loss. The enemy were, however, in force

* *Loyalties*, p. 250, footnote.

in their second line, and gradually the 19th got drawn into the battle also.

Meanwhile the Cavalry Division was only utilising half its strength in the task given it of holding the enemy. The 7th Brigade acted dismounted in this task, while the 6th Brigade was given the purely defensive role of guarding the left flank, in case some reinforcement should come up (though actually there *were* none).

At 4.20 the Seaforth Highlanders of the 19th Brigade made an attack on the left of the lodgment already effected in the hostile line, covered by a barrage. This attack was completely successful, the very sight of the dreaded kilts sufficing to send the Turks streaming to the rear. The commander of the 7th Cavalry Brigade could see this attack, and he considered the time had come to give the infantry more active support. He therefore ordered the 13th Hussars, who had made a brilliant charge at Lajj, before Baghdad, to attack with mounted action. The leading squadrons were to charge the front trench and then wheel to their right and sweep along it towards the assaulting infantry. " B " Squadron, followed by " C," managed to get close up to the trench under a heavy but wild fire. At that point the position appeared to be practically denuded of the enemy, but the squadron commander saw a party in the open to his left. So, being joined by " C," he took forward the two squadrons practically in line, and galloped along the trench to the left for about 1200 yards, charging through the enemy. Both squadrons then wheeled round and returned, with a loss of about twenty-eight (including the squadron commander) out of the hundred or so that had taken part in the charge. Meanwhile " A " and " D " Squadrons had followed up, but lost touch in the dust and gathering darkness. They veered more to their right, got in touch with the infantry, and then pushed on straight into the hostile position for some way. But most of the Turks had by then fled, and they fell back to cover on the return of " B " and " C." There can be no doubt that this vigorous action hastened the flight of the enemy, and helped to seal the victory.

During the battle the artillery and machine guns of the 21st Brigade co-operated with long-range fire.

The captured position was held by the infantry during the night and next morning it was found that the Turks had slipped away in the night. Our casualties had been heavier than the Turks', about 1,800 to 1,500 ; but the position was a strong one,

and yet seven battalions had sufficed to capture it. Such stores as the enemy had not already destroyed were captured, and then the force returned to Samarra, while the Turks took up a new position at Fat-ha.

COMMENTS.

Again only a small portion of the force was engaged (apart from the artillery, who suffered very heavy losses): 50 per cent. of the cavalry and 40 per cent. of the infantry, if we include the 9th Brigade—and there was no object in it coming along if it was not to be included. General Cobbe's reason for giving the cavalry such a limited and slightly unconventional role is understandable. Nevertheless, their task could have been carried out equally well, if not better, by one of the unemployed infantry brigades, and it is possible that at the second time of asking, and if the Turks were thoroughly demoralised (which it seems they were), the cavalry might have been able at least to inflict punishment on the enemy, whose retirement was bound to be constricted by the river. What a chance it would have presented to a Lannes or a Prince Rupert! But Cobbe was not aiming so high as Brooking had aimed. His aim was the destruction of the stores rather than the destruction of the whole force. And he achieved his aim, so there is no more to be said in the matter.

It is to be noted that, though the cavalry appear to have held the enemy to his trenches, they were not successful in diverting the fire of the occupants from our infantry, who were much annoyed by enfilade fire from the left. This is only to be expected. A mere demonstration cannot effect much after the first hour or two.

The fog of battle was greater than usual, in spite of the provision of flares to the infantry in order to indicate their position to the aeroplanes. Only a few infantrymen made use of them.*

In this battle 6,000 Turkish rifles in a strong position were opposed by about 14,000 British; but less than 6,000 of them sufficed to bring about the victory, a very creditable performance.

* This reluctance of the infantry to make use of flares was not confined to the Mesopotamian front.

CHAPTER X

Winter, 1917-1918—Death of Maude—Qara Tepe.

NOVEMBER, 1917, was a black month for our arms. On the 8th the Bolshevik revolution broke out, thus destroying any faint hopes that still remained of Russian co-operation; on the 18th Sir Stanley Maude died of cholera—an almost irreparable disaster.

This is not the place for a panegyric on the great commander. In any case, panegyrics, like lapidary inscriptions, are not made upon oath. To obtain the truest picture of a man one must consult the unofficial opinions of those who served immediately under him. One such was Colonel Tennant, the commander of his air force. This is what he writes: "It was difficult to get to know General Maude, but once one did it was perfect to work for him. His achievement in Mesopotamia was remarkable, for he had taken on what might almost be called a hopeless task. Failure after failure under a ravaging climate had depressed the troops. Considerable incompetence prevailed; to the casual observer the main idea seemed to be to get out of the country. Maude fought it down, and gradually, even to the lowest rank, the call of duty to make the best of it over-rode everything else. . . . Maude led the troops himself. . . . He was often too far to the front; during the pursuit his river-boat was generally close up behind the cavalry. Commanders, annoyed to see the G.H.Q. ship passing them, pressed on."* Elsewhere he describes him as "a personality dominant and absorbing."

The official historian sums him up well in a single sentence: "The force of his personality had so dominated the campaign that it was regarded generally as his individual effort to an extent that is unusual."†

The faultless commander has not yet been born, and it is significant that Maude's immediate subordinates were united in pointing to his chief weakness, which was, in the words of one

* *In the Clouds above Baghdad*, p. 226.

† *Official History*, iv, 85.

of them: "His almost irrepressible instinct for doing whatever had to be done himself."* When a man believes, and is justified in believing, that he is more capable than anyone else of doing the thing, it is a great temptation to interfere in the execution of the operation he has ordered. Yet military history shows, in other campaigns besides this, that such interference is seldom helpful. Improvement of communications, whereby such interference is rendered easier, has done much to remove the spirit and sparkle from the operations of our generals—that sparkle that many of them loved long since, and have lost awhile.

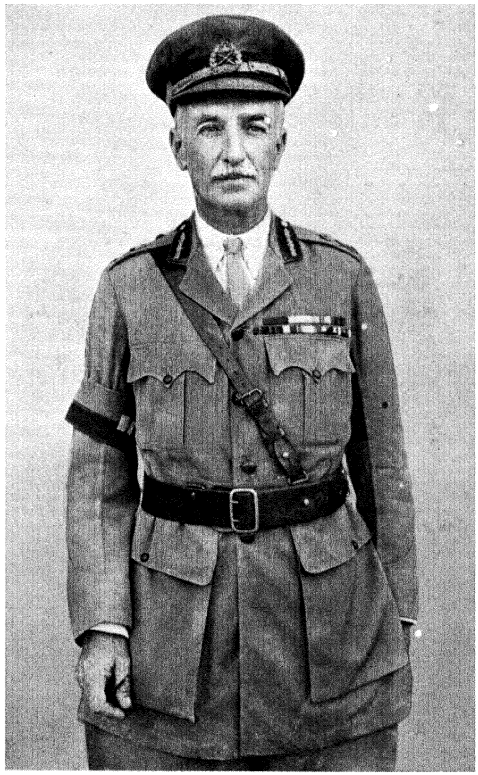
Sir William Marshall stepped into the empty shoes, and uncomfortable shoes they must have been at first, not only because he was succeeding a man whom it was difficult to replace, but because from no source could he discover what were his predecessor's plans for the future. He, however, received a recapitulation of general policy from the C.I.G.S., which can be summed up in the statement that his mission was primarily defensive, but that this defence was to be made as active as possible.

In the light of our present knowledge the strategical situation was as unsatisfactory as it could be. We were still unaware that the Turco-German offensive had been abandoned, though it had evidently been postponed, for a large portion of the Seventh Army had been sent to Palestine, where Allenby was hammering at the gates of Jerusalem. Yet our army was about at its maximum. One cavalry and six infantry divisions† formed the striking force on the Baghdad front; the ration strength (less followers) was 253,000, and fresh units, in response to Maude's recent request, were still arriving.

The disparity between the strength and quality of the two sides at this time was most striking. According to Larcher the Turks had only 33,000 troops in the battle line. "These 33,000 men, spread over an arc of a circle of 240 miles, were incapable of resisting an attack; they had no strategic reserve in rear. Besides, their fighting capacity tended towards zero in proportion as Turkey became weaker; establishments were deficient; the troops were only recruits of all races, demoralized and inclined to desertion. The most terrible privations decimated these unhappy troops; according to the German mission,

* *Life of Sir Stanley Maude*, by Callwell, p. 323.

† 3rd, 7th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 17th.



[*Photo: Imperial War Museum*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR W. R. MARSHALL,
K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

17,000 died of hunger and privation during the winter of 1917–1918."*

A completely satisfactory solution to the problem that faced Marshall did not exist. But he determined to continue what appeared to be the intention of his predecessor, and gradually extend the area under his control. The nearest opponent was now the XIII Corps to the north of the Jabal Hamrin, and thither the new army commander turned his attention.

THE QARA TEPE DRIVE, DECEMBER 3RD–5TH.

The Turks were believed to have 3,400 rifles in the area Qara Tepe–Diyala. General Sir R. G. Egerton (who had succeeded Marshall in the command of the III Corps) formed the following plan for surprising and destroying this force. The 14th Division, assisted by a detachment of 1,000 Russian cavalry, was to cross the Diyala near Qizil Ribat and turn the hostile left flank, while the 13th Division captured the Sakaltutan Pass over the Jabal Hamrin on the Qara Tepe road. Both columns were then to converge on Qara Tepe. Marshall accepted this plan, but added to the force the cavalry division which he ordered to advance up the eastern bank of the Adhaim, cross the Jabal Hamrin, and cut the enemy's communications with Kifri. Including the Russians we were thus employing over 20,000 sabres and rifles against 3,500—another example of the Nasmyth hammer.

The columns approached their allotted positions before dawn on December 3rd. The enemy was evidently surprised and offered no resistance. The 14th Division crossed the Diyala and bivouacked that night a mile or two beyond. The 13th Division reached the pass without much opposition, but finding it occupied and having only mountain guns with them they decided to await the field artillery before attacking. Ultimately they decided to attack the pass at dawn on the 4th. But the Turks slipped away in the night.† The next day only slow progress was made owing to inundations and the intricacy of the country. On the 5th the advance was continued and Kifri occupied after slight resistance; 255 prisoners had been captured.

And what of the cavalry? The story is rather a peculiar one. It will be remembered that Egerton had not included them in his original plan, presumably considering that until the Jabal

* *La Guerre Turque dans la Guerre Mondiale*, p. 352.

† G.H.Q. had reported that they would do so!

Hamrin on the left was in our hands, it was useless to ask cavalry to attempt to cross it. By making a very wide sweep, however, there was the chance that an unopposed crossing might be achieved. But this was loomed to disappointment, for when they approached the foothills on December 2nd they were shelled and brought to a stand. The cavalry division had however been given the mission of forcing and securing a road through the Jabal Hamrin, so next morning efforts were made to find some practicable route. Two tracks were found, to right and to left, but as both were impassable for wheels they were not used. Meanwhile, Marshall had received what he calls "secret information" to the effect that the enemy intended to ambush the cavalry division. He therefore ordered it to confine itself to reconnaissance and demonstrations, in order to retain the maximum enemy in its front.

The source of this information was too close a secret to divulge to the cavalry, who were left guessing at the strange alteration of orders. But next day, the 4th, these orders were evidently relaxed, for the 7th Brigade received orders to cross the Adhaim and try to turn the Turkish right flank. At 7 a.m. accordingly it crossed the river and was proceeding on its mission when at 8.20 a.m. the cavalry division sent to recall it. The divisional commander had soon repented of his boldness in depriving himself of half his force, since there was the possibility that the enemy might counter-attack. There is, of course, always the possibility that the enemy may counter-attack, though what the likelihood of it was in this case is not evident. Possibly the idea was induced by the receipt of an air message that the hostile position was still strongly occupied. In any case it would have suited our book exactly if the enemy *had* come down our side of the ridge and thus facilitated our efforts to cut them off and "destroy" them. Our great trouble was that the enemy was generally too grasshopper-like, and would not stay to be hammered. Be that as it may, the 7th Brigade was brought once more under the parental wing, and any remaining chance of cutting the Kifri road vanished.

On December 6th the whole force withdrew and took up a new line Khaniqin–Qizil Ribat–Sakaltutan Pass. Our losses had been very light, those of the Turks slightly higher. This was the last operation in which the cavalry division figured. It is not surprising to hear that, a few months later, Marshall broke it up and the cavalry brigades became independent formations.

THE WINTER.

In December the C.I.G.S. decided that the time had come to cut down the size of the army in Mesopotamia—a decision that is not surprising, especially in view of the fact that the 17th and 18th Divisions were practically complete. The 7th Division was accordingly sent to Egypt. Russia had now gone out of the war entirely, and there seemed a possibility of Turkey over-running Persia as a consequence. To avert this danger if possible, a mission, later increased into a force and known as "Dunsterforce," was prepared under the command of General Dunsterville, who was called from India for the purpose.

The opening of 1918 found both sides at a deadlock. The Turks were almost physically incapable of fighting for the time being, and the British lacked the transport facilities to reach them and strike a heavy blow. By reorganising the lines of communications, Marshall had been able to find men to occupy the fertile district of the Euphrates from Falluja to Nasiriya, thus simplifying our supply problem.

In February Sir Henry Wilson became C.I.G.S. and lost no time in cutting down the army still further. Marshall calculated that he could spare two divisions, but General Monro, Commander-in-Chief in India, fearing for the safety of that country, deprecated a reduction of more than one division. The C.I.G.S. concurred and the 3rd Division was dispatched to Palestine. With the arrival of the 18th Division this made the composition of the I Corps 17th and 18th Divisions. Both these were Indian divisions, and consisted largely of recruits.

During February Marshall decided to turn the Turks out of Hit, as he wanted to take possession of the valuable bitumen wells in its vicinity. But the Turks obliged by abandoning it on our approach and falling back on Khan Baghdadi, twenty miles upstream. The partridges were getting shy. But Marshall took note of where they lit, and commissioned Brooking to get into them again as soon as they had settled down. How he did this will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

Khan Baghdadi and Tuz.

THE task set General Brooking was more difficult than the one he had so successfully carried out at Ramadi. Knowing how shy the birds had become, he decided that it would be useless to apply the method he had adopted at Ramadi—namely not to attempt to disguise the fact that an offensive was intended, but to mislead the enemy as to the place. He bent his efforts this time to inducing the Turks to believe that his force was about to go into summer quarters. For this reason he started to construct a defensive position, aerial reconnaissance was reduced to a minimum, and the forward concentration of the troops was delayed till the last moment. Further to mislead the enemy, Marshall arranged for a number of demonstrations to be carried out on the other fronts. These demonstrations, contrary to the usual fate of such demonstrations, seem to have achieved their object.

General Marshall gave his main object to the C.I.G.S. as merely to push back the Turks some way from Hit; but in the event Brooking aimed as high as he had aimed at Ramadi—he aimed at destroying the whole force opposed to him. The Turks were computed to have 2,800 rifles at Khan Baghdadi. Against this Brooking had ten and a half battalions of his own 15th Division—say 9,000 rifles—which would give him the comfortable superiority of over three to one. In addition, he had Cassels' newly-formed 11th Cavalry Brigade. But before the attack could be brought off the enemy garrison had risen to 5,300.

KHAN BAGHDADI, MARCH 26TH, 1918. (*Sketch Map* 7.)

The Turkish first line lay just in front of the town. It was about two miles in length and its left flank rested as usual on the river. Three miles in rear was the second line, rather longer than the first, and believed to be occupied in greater strength. The country was rough and had not been so well mapped as the country round Ramadi. A mobile column,

consisting of about 900 rifles carried in Ford vans, and a motor battery was formed under Colonel Hogg, to assist in the pursuit, but it was not known whether the ground would admit of its acting with the cavalry. The mission of the latter was to make a wide swing round the hostile western flank and act with boldness against the flank or rear as opportunity offered, whilst the infantry attacked in front. Thirteen armoured cars accompanied it.

The force was concentrated at Sahiliya on March 25th and moved off in the night to approach the position under cover of darkness. The order of march of the infantry was by groups. Andrew's 50th Brigade group led off, followed at a distance of about four miles by the 42nd Brigade group, and another five miles in rear came the reserve, one and a half battalions and Hogg's group. Cassels moved off to the left, accompanied, when it became light, by contact planes which proved of great assistance in locating his position, for his maps were very faulty.

Andrew obtained contact during the night and then, according to plan, waited for the 42nd to come up before attacking. The latter was to join up on the right, but before it arrived, at 10 a.m., the Turks began to retire, and Andrew without waiting either for the 42nd or for orders from the division pushed forward with great spirit, captured the position before all the enemy had time to evacuate it and took 100 prisoners. Not waiting to consolidate the position he pushed on again in hot pursuit, while Brooking exhorted the 42nd to do the same. At 1 p.m. the 50th had come to a stand before the Turkish second line. Andrew decided not to assault it until the arrival of the 42nd, which took place about 4 p.m. He then made arrangements for a combined attack, to be preceded by an artillery barrage.

Meanwhile, the cavalry had managed by 2 p.m. to reach the Wadi Hauran, five miles in rear of the second position. From here Cassels extended to his left till he covered the Aleppo road, thus effectually cutting off the Turkish retreat. Brooking shrewdly suspected that the Turks were merely holding their second position till nightfall and that they would slip away in the night. He therefore warned Cassels to be prepared to be attacked during the night. Cassels sat down and waited.

To assist in the impending attack by our infantry, Brooking sent forward Hogg's mobile column, as Cassels had advised against sending them round the way he had gone; he also sent forward his reserve—everything was to be thrown into the fight.

After an effective bombardment from 5.30 to 6 p.m. four battalions advanced to the assault, on a frontage of 900 yards, suffering surprisingly light casualties owing to the curtain of dust thrown up by the shells. The position was stormed and 1,000 prisoners captured. It was now getting dark and Andrew decided to halt till 5 a.m. He issued orders to this effect. Brooking, whose position was somewhat distant, did not hear of this order till 9 p.m. It was not to his liking and at 10.15 he issued orders that the infantry were to exert continuous and relentless pressure all night, despite fatigue. He also ordered the artillery to shell certain areas all night. It was the time for a supreme effort from all ranks. Andrew did not receive this order till after midnight, but he then did his best to comply with it. It took, however, nearly four hours before his brigade was well on the move, and the 42nd was still later.

Meanwhile at midnight the attempt of the Turks to break through Cassels was made. But it hit the strongest part of the line, was completely broken and less than an hour later 1,000 Turks laid down their arms. Just before dawn another 2,000 surrendered to the armoured cars on the Aleppo road. Cassels then sent half the cars along the Aleppo road to capture any fugitives that might have slipped through.

Three to four thousand prisoners had been captured by dawn, but Brooking was not satisfied. There was to be an immediate further pursuit by the cavalry, armoured cars and mobile column. This pursuit, animated by the driving force of the commander and exhilarated by events, pushed on at a prodigious pace. Haditha was reached before noon. Some way beyond the town Nazim Bey, the unfortunate commander of the 50th Division, was captured with his staff. It became known that Colonel Tennant and another officer who had been shot down on the previous day and captured were being hurried away to the rear, and Cassels was ordered to push right on to Ana, destroy the wireless and stores there and rescue Tennant. This was work after Cassels' heart; he pushed on and captured Ana with his armoured cars at 8.30 a.m. on the 28th; and immediately sent forward the 8th Light Armoured Battery with instructions that it was to rescue Tennant even if it had to go 100 miles to effect its purpose. Thirty-two miles beyond Ana the battery came up with the British officers, rescued them, and continued yet another twenty miles on the road to Aleppo before it drew rein.

In the course of this hurricane pursuit many more prisoners had been captured and stores taken or destroyed; 5,354 prisoners in all were captured and practically the whole of the Turkish 50th Division was accounted for. An advanced detachment was left at Haditha and the res. of the force was gradually withdrawn.

The lessons of this sparkling affair are too obvious to be dwelt upon; but it must be insisted that however good the organisation and orders, such a complete success could not have been obtained had not the morale of the force been at an exceptionally high level. The troops had faith in their commander, and he in turn had faith in them, and had been able to report before the battle to the army commander that they were fit and full of eagerness. He had also emphasised the fact that units and formations would be scattered and that group commanders must be prepared to act upon their own, each group being to a certain extent self-supporting. This exhortation was evidently not lost upon the commander of the 50th Brigade.

That shrewd commentator Sir Arnold Wilson described the action as "a classic example of the effective co-operation of all arms and of the immense value of cavalry and armoured cars under vigorous leadership and skilful direction."* The information given by the air during the battle had been particularly complete. The whole force worked like a well oiled engine; there was remarkably little of the "friction of war." Candler sums up the achievement in a notable passage: "The endurance and rapidity of the troops were extraordinary. The infantry were marching two days and two nights with little or no sleep, and fighting all day and part of two nights. The cavalry covered something like ninety miles in the first two days, and the armoured cars 170 miles apart from detours, between Hit and the farthest point of the pursuit. . . . Khan Baghdadi was a crushing blow to the Turk."† After our extensive destruction of the stores that he had slowly amassed along the Euphrates for his projected offensive, it was clear that little need be feared from that quarter for some time to come.

Finally, the operation is a good example of the value of studying the personality of the opposing commander. Brooking knew that Nazim Bey was a "thruster," and he rightly expected that he would stand and fight.

* *A Clash of Loyalties*, p. 8.

† *The Long Road to Baghdad*, p. 271.

NARRATIVE. (*Sketch Map* 8.)

General Marshall now turned his attention to the other flank. In order to protect the communications of "Dunsterforce" through Persia, he decided to capture and hold the area Kifri–Tuz Khurmatli (called Tuz for short). The XIII Corps was distributed as follows:—*6th Division* in the area Mosul–Kirkuk; *2nd Division* Kirkuk–Qara Tepe. General Egerton concocted the following complicated but ingenious plan. A converging attack on Qara Tepe was to be simulated. This, it was conjectured, would induce the enemy to fall back on Kifri; but the real attack was to be wider flung—it was to embrace Tuz, some twenty miles north-west of Kifri. Thus, while the Turk was congratulating himself at having once more escaped from the toils and was composedly settling down in the neighbourhood of Kifri the line would be cut twenty miles behind that place.

To carry out this ambitious operation five columns were formed. Starting on the right, half the 37th was to cross the Diyala north of Qizil Ribat and move on Qara Tepe, 40th was to cross the Jabal Hamrin by the Kifri road and get to the north-west of Qara Tepe. On the left the 38th was to cross by the same pass as the 40th and veer left against Abu Gharaib, which was to be simultaneously attacked in front by the 14th Lancers. Meanwhile the 6th Cavalry Brigade (in which the 13th Hussars had replaced the 14th) was to push right on to Tuz and surprise and destroy the Turks in that area. The total of these forces came to about 1,500 sabres and 9,000 rifles. Against this the Turks could put about 3,000 rifles and sabres, which gave us the fairly normal superiority of three to one. To assist the operation, which would take the troops far beyond railhead, and on a wide front, 1,300 M.T. vans were supplied. Fifty of these were used to convey 150 infantry who accompanied the 6th Cavalry Brigade.

The columns took up their preliminary positions on April 26th. There had been a good deal of rain, and the crops were ripening in this most fertile region of Kurdistan; water for horses had at last ceased to be an anxious problem, but the very abundance of watercourses proved a hindrance to the progress of all vehicles. Great secrecy had been observed; we had almost a monopoly of the air during the operations, and it was believed that the Turks had not got wind of the enterprise.

THE TUZ OPERATIONS, APRIL 27TH TO 29TH.

During the night of April 26th–27th all the columns moved

forward, meeting everywhere with little opposition ; the 37th and 40th converged on Qara Tepe, but the Turks had taken fright and for the *n*th time* had slipped away in the night. Similarly did they evacuate Abu Gharaib before the arrival of the 38th and the 14th Lancers. But there was still the possibility that the cavalry brigade would succeed in its mission, in which case all the enemy to the south of Tuz should be captured.

The cavalry met with no opposition till 8 a.m. when the leading regiment located what appeared to be a rearguard position at Kulawand. General Holland-Prior deployed his brigade with the original intention of holding the enemy in front with the horsemen while the motor battery and Lewis guns in vans worked round the hostile right. But the ground was cut up with ravines and swamps, and the plan was altered. The wheeled portion of the force held the enemy in front while the horsemen turned his right. Soon after noon the whole cavalry brigade was deployed in a long concave line facing east, with the enemy's position about two miles away. Holland-Prior now decided on a bold manœuvre. Supported by the fire of the eight field-guns which had accompanied his force, he launched a mounted attack straight at the hostile position. The line swept forward slowly at first, but broke into a gallop when within 500 yards of the position. Some of the enemy opened an ill-directed fire upon the advancing line ; others fled to the rear. The cavalry got right into those that stayed with the sword, and killed nearly 200 of them, and 565 prisoners were taken. It was a complete success, and the boldness of the manœuvre was justified to the hilt.

But there was more work to be done. The orders were to capture Tuz. The wheels were, however, sent off to capture Kifri, which they effected without difficulty. The horsemen continued on towards Tuz, which was found to be strongly held. It was now 4 p.m., and the cavalry had been on the move since midnight. It was considered too late to launch a fresh attack ; but the enemy were now aware of the presence of the cavalry, and if they bivouacked where they were the enemy might adopt their favourite course of slipping away in the night. The brigadier therefore withdrew his force, as if retiring, and bivouacked to the south of Kulawand. The brigade had achieved a great deal with the astonishingly small casualty list of fourteen.

* To be precise, the thirteenth time.

While this was going on the infantry columns were steadily advancing with little or no opposition, and at nightfall the 37th had reached nearly half way between Qara Tepe and Kifri; the 40th was nine miles north-west of Qara Tepe; the 38th halted by orders at Abu Gharaib.

Next morning, April 28th, the cavalry moved forward again. Tuz and Yanija Buyuk were found to be occupied, but a ford was seized three miles to the left of the latter village. The cavalry had now been placed under the orders of the 13th Division, whose commander decided to take the position by a combined action of the infantry and cavalry. The task of the latter was to cross by the ford so as to cut off the enemy's retreat on Kirkuk. The remainder of the day was accordingly spent by the cavalry in crossing the ford. Some delay was caused by having to improve the ford for the wheels. The bottom was, as a matter of fact, good and the river appeared fordable everywhere, though Headquarters were presumably unaware of this fact. However, by nightfall the bulk of the brigade was across and a knoll occupied nearly a mile to the north.

In the meantime the infantry were approaching, and before dark the 40th had reached Kulawand and the 38th a point six miles to the west of it.

It was believed that four battalions were in Tuz and Yanija Buyuk, and the following plan was made for the morrow. The cavalry during the night were to get astride the Tuz–Kirkuk road; the 38th was to cross the river during the night and next morning to attack eastwards while the 40th attacked northwards straight on Tuz. But at 8.45 p.m. there occurred one of those little misunderstandings that are so common in war. A telephoned message from the cavalry was evidently misunderstood at 13th Division headquarters. Apparently what the speaker intended was that the cavalry had been ordered to advance to cut the Kirkuk road; what the division understood was that they had already got there. It was true that, according to their orders, they should have got there, but in actual fact they had not. They had been held up in front of Yanija Buyuk. But accepting this report, the divisional commander concluded that the only line of escape now open to the enemy was by a track to the north-east, and he ordered the 40th to send a battalion in the night to seize this track as early as possible next morning.

A battalion was accordingly sent out during the night with this object, and the remainder of the 40th followed a few hours later. But instead of making a detour in order to evade the Turkish

position south of the river opposite Tuz, it was ordered, in the first instance, to ascertain if the position was still occupied. The position was in fact still held, and its occupants greeted the battalion with a heavy fire. To manœuvre a battalion in the dark under such conditions is, of course, practically impossible.

The remainder of the 40th came up and soon after dawn managed to dislodge the enemy from a ridge to the right. But they had not yet crossed the river nor blocked the track to the north-east.

On the left, the 38th duly crossed the river during the night and at dawn passed through the 13th Hussars, who were sent off to join the remainder of the cavalry brigade on the left, while the 38th pushed on and captured Yanija Buyuk at 7 a.m. with only slight loss. The advance was continued, being ably supported by the artillery from the south bank of the river, and at 9 a.m. Tuz was captured and many prisoners taken.

To return to the cavalry. During the night they had not quite succeeded in reaching the Kirkuk road, as they encountered opposition at Yanija Kuchuk, a village on that road. But when the 13th Hussars joined the remainder of the brigade about 8 a.m. more vigorous action was displayed. The leading two troops of the 13th Hussars, under Second-Lieutenant H. M. Macdonald were approaching a knoll mounted when the left of the line was fired at from the knoll at 500 yards' range. Macdonald speedily inclined to his right out of the line of fire, and then swung on round the enemy's left by a circular track, and charged into them from the rear. The result of this sudden and decided action was amazing. The whole body of forty Turks and five machine guns was captured without a single casualty to our cavalry. The affair was over in less than five minutes. Colonel Richardson, who commanded the regiment, describes it as "the quickest and prettiest small piece of work it has been my fortune to witness. . . . It put great heart into the Indians."* This was the fourth time the 13th Hussars had distinguished themselves by mounted charges, and their fame stood deservedly high.

Macdonald's action was the signal for a general surrender of the surviving Turks all over the battlefield, and such as tried to retreat were charged down by the pursuing cavalry. In all 1,300 Turks were captured, while our casualties were only 194.

* *The 13th Hussars in the Great War.*

COMMENTS.

Looking at these operations as a whole we get the curious result that the elusive Turk escaped from the net that was so elaborately and laboriously set for him, only to meet his downfall by needlessly standing when surprise had already evaporated and when escape was easy. Consider the position. He occupies a position at Tuz. Our cavalry approach it and, twenty-four hours later, are reinforced by infantry. The following night the cavalry are across the river and in touch with the enemy's flank. Everything points to his slipping away in the night for the $n+1$th time. Why did he not do so? History is silent. Possibly the reason was merely sheer physical fatigue. The Turkish 2nd Division was very badly found, and its morale was very low. Or possibly they expected to be reinforced, though of this we have no evidence. Perhaps the ruse of the cavalry in withdrawing on the evening of the 27th deceived them. However we look at it, it would seem that the III Corps was not so deserving of complete success as the 15th Division had been on the other flank on two occasions. Yet the cavalry, on whom so much depended, had distinguished themselves. They had shown a nice perception of what is possible when the enemy is low in morale. Leavened by that splendid regiment the 13th Hussars, the Indian cavalry brigade had done all that could be expected of it.

The extent of the final success was undoubtedly due to the co-operation of all arms, and the general pressure at all points on the harassed enemy. But for the failure of the 40th to close the track to the north-east of the Tuz scarcely a man would have escaped. The order to the 40th to block this road was issued under a misconception, but it might very well have been issued in any circumstances. We had ample troops to allow of this temporary dispersion.

Finally, the whole of this campaign has shown that an enemy cannot be "pinned" to his ground if he does not wish to be. All the attacker can do is to concentrate superior force with the power and the will to surround him. The enemy must then either retire or be destroyed, but the decision is in *his* hands, not in ours.

NARRATIVE.

An interesting triangular discussion now ensued between the War Office, General Marshall and India. The C.I.G.S. was in favour of an advance on Kirkuk, with the object of causing the recall of the troops that Turkey had just sent into Trans-

Caucasia consequent on the defection of Russia. Marshall was in favour of holding the ground he had just won, but not in favour of advancing. Supply difficulties would be considerable if he did, and he considered that he would still be able to deter any Turks from entering Persia via Kirkuk. Monro was in favour of advancing on Mosul or utilising all available transport in maintaining a line through Hamadan. The upshot was that Marshall acceded to the wishes of Sir Henry Wilson and occupied Kirkuk on May 7th. But on the 14th he evacuated it again owing to supply difficulties and owing to the danger of being cut off if he remained there. Sir Arnold Wilson describes the decision to occupy Kirkuk as " the one false step of a man whose career in Mesopotamia was conspicuous for the good judgment displayed in reaching critical decisions."*

* *A Clash of Loyalties*, p. 9.

CHAPTER XII

Summer, 1918—Dunsterforce.

(Map A.)

SELDOM can any portion of the world's surface have been the scene of such a mosaic of conflicting parties and interests as the region in which Dunsterforce was destined to operate in the summer months of 1918. It may clear the ground if we start by tabulating the main parties, and their main objects, in very summarised form :—

Nationality or Party.	*Main Object.*
Turks	To conquer Trans-Caucasia.
Bolshevik Russians	To make peace and go home.
Anti-Bolshevik Russians ...	To control the Caspian and join hands with the British.
Trans-Caucasian Republic (formed in April, consisting of Georgia, Russian Armenia and Azerbaijan)	To obtain independence of both Russians and Turks.
Turkish Armenians (mainly Christians)	To escape from the Moslem yoke.
Germans (who had penetrated into the Ukraine)	To penetrate into Persia and Afghanistan.
Persia (neutral)	To be left alone by all parties—suspicious of all.
British	To prevent the Turco-Germans overrunning Persia and Afghanistan.

The original mission of Dunsterforce was to encourage and assist Trans-Caucasia. To get to its capital, Tiflis, the mission would have to cross Persia and the Caspian from Enzeli to Baku. In February Dunsterville set off from Baghdad with a little band of 75 specially selected officers and other ranks. But on reaching Enzeli he was held up by the local Bolsheviks and forced to return to Hamadan.

The complexion of the mission was accordingly changed: its main object now became to prevent the penetration of Persia and Afghanistan by Turkey and Germany—a sufficiently arduous task for such a tiny force, even though it was continually being increased by small driblets. Dunsterville's main course of procedure was to enlist local levies, and in this he was fairly successful. To simplify the work he suggested that we should occupy the road Khaniqin–Hamadan–Enzeli with one cavalry and

one infantry brigade, thus forming a firm barrier right across Persia. Ultimately two whole divisions were asked for for this purpose.

There were many attractive points about the project. Russia was now completely out of the war, and the Turkish forces in Mesopotamia were weak and scattered, and it would be difficult to get up to them and attack them. The Persian project would therefore serve as occupation for some of our troops locked up in the country, especially during the summer months when operations in Mesopotamia were almost impossible. In any case, the German spring offensive in the West precluded further offensive action in Palestine and Mesopotamia for the time being, and both theatres came to be regarded as a strategical reserve for the other fronts (though the *cul-de-sac* of Baghdad was hardly an ideal situation for such a reserve).

But there were difficulties, and Marshall, whose responsibilities were in March extended to cover all military measures necessary to check enemy penetration through Persia, was keenly aware of them. He was opposed to Dunsterville's proposal for the maintenance of a considerable force in Persia, and said so. In fact, he states in his book, at a slightly later date, " I hated the whole business."* The supply difficulties were the main objection, and they had not been adequately weighed at home. Marshall proposed as an alternative the provision of a mobile column, and after some delay this was formed and entered Persia in June. It consisted mainly of 400 men of the 1st/4th Hants and 600 men of the 1st/2nd Gurkhas. Dunsterforce was also reinforced by an armoured car squadron consisting of 40 armoured cars.

The C.I.G.S., encouraged thereto by Lord Curzon (the chairman of the " Eastern Committee "), was strongly in favour of the Persian adventure, and a note almost of acerbity creeps into his communications with Marshall, who was doing his best to limit the size of the force. As Marshall himself says in his book : " If the Turks moved forces to the Caucasus, why should we conform ? Why hand over the strategic initiative to one's enemy ? Strike at his vitals instead."† The Army Commander's alternative suggestion was that he should advance on Mosul, but Sir Henry Wilson did not agree. In mid-July Marshall went on leave to India (returning early in September), but the clash of opinion went on.

Sir Arnold Wilson, who had replaced Sir Percy Cox as Civil

* *Memories of Four Fronts*, p. 311.

† *Ibid.*, p. 286.

Commissioner, seems to have shared Marshall's view on Dunsterforce, which he describes as "Individually gallant, but collectively ineffective filibusters."*

In July the Persian force was reinforced by the 39th Brigade and an artillery brigade. On July 26th the port of Baku, which had overthrown its Bolshevik masters, appealed for help to Dunsterville. It was important that we should keep the oil wells there situated out of the hands of the Germans; and as the Turks were slowly but steadily approaching it, Dunsterville sent a party of 44 men of the 1st/4th Hants, under Colonel R. G. Keyworth, R.A. It arrived on August 4th, and was soon after reinforced by three battalions of the 39th Brigade and one field battery. This is not the place to describe the details of the heroic defence that this force put up, nor of the exciting evacuation. An idea of the impression that those four county battalions made on the inhabitants of that far-off corner of the earth can be obtained from the following letter addressed to General Dunsterville after the evacuation: "We, the committee and crew of the s.s. *Kursk*, have witnessed with intense admiration the heroic conduct of your brave British soldiers in the defence of Baku. We have seen them suffering wounds and death in defence of our town, which our own people were too feeble to defend. It is wonderful to us that these fine fellows from that distant island in the North Sea should have come all this way to the Caspian and have given up their lives there in the cause of honour and glory. We are so much impressed by their bearing and valour and by the whole episode of the British endeavours to save Baku from the Turks that we wish to be at once taken over as a body and granted British nationality."†

Dunsterforce as such was now broken up, but a large force, almost the strength of a division, was retained in Persia under the command of General W. M. Thomson.

* * * * *

Throughout the summer the British troops in Mesopotamia, and their opponents, had remained quiescent. The army had been reduced by a battalion in each brigade (13th Division excepted). These twelve battalions had been transferred to the enemy's other large "internment camp"—Salonica.

Halil had gone off to the Caucasus, and had been succeeded in the command of the Sixth Army by Ali Ihsan.

* *A Clash of Loyalties.*

† *Official History*, p. 246 (note).

CHAPTER XIII

Sharqat.

(*Sketch Maps* 9 *and* 10.)

On September 25th Bulgaria asked for an armistice. Seven days later it was learnt that Turkey, prostrated by Allenby's great victory in Palestine, was on the verge of adopting the same course. The British Government decided to take advantage of these propitious circumstances to strike another blow as soon as possible in Mesopotamia. They proposed two operations: to advance on Mosul, and also up the Euphrates. To this Marshall objected that, largely owing to the operations in Persia, he had not sufficient transport to carry out both operations simultaneously. He favoured the Mosul project, and eventually obtained the Government's concurrence and the order to proceed with it.

Some space must now be devoted to a description of the terrain and the Turkish dispositions. Thirty-five miles north of Tikrit the Tigris rushes through a deep gorge near the village of Fat-ha. The eastern bank of the gorge is formed by the north-western extremity of our old friend the Jabal Hamrin ridge. The western bank is formed by a continuation of the ridge under the name of Jabal Makhul. This ridge bounds the west bank of the Tigris for nearly twenty miles without being crossed by a single pass till Ain Dibs is reached. From there to Mosul the ground, though less mountainous, remains very rough and inaccessible as far as Sharqat. The road from Fat-ha to Sharqat runs between ridge and river, while the desert road from Tikrit to Mosul runs to the west of the ridge. Another road follows the east bank. On this bank, in striking contrast to the other, the ground is dead flat, once the Jabal Hamrin is passed; the only obstacle thereafter being the Little Zab, a wide but fordable river that joins the Tigris at Humr.

The Turks had constructed a formidable position at the Fat-ha gorge, on both banks of the river, extending a few miles on each side. Twenty miles in rear a second position had been made. On the west bank it started at Humr, included Mushak and Ain

Dibs and bent sharply back to Balalij. On the east bank it ran along the north bank of the Little Zab for about ten miles, but was only lightly entrenched. It was computed that the garrison of the Fat-ha position consisted of 2,600 rifles and 28 guns, and of the Humr position 7,500 rifles and 42 guns. The 2nd Turkish Division was at Kirkuk, 1,700 rifles, 26 guns. The 5th Division was in rear and was expected to reinforce the Tigris front; its 2,400 rifles and 25 guns had therefore to be reckoned with.

Marshall's wish was to turn the Jabal Hamrin by advancing through Kirkuk, but transport difficulties ruled out this operation. He, however, found it possible to detach a small force, consisting of half the 40th Brigade under General Lewin, to move on Kirkuk and Altun Köpri (on the little Zab to the north of Kirkuk) with the object of preventing the 2nd Division from detaching any troops to the Tigris. The main striking force consisted of the 1st Corps (17th and 18th Divisions) and 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades; also the Light Armoured Motor Brigade (L.A.M.B. for short), consisting of one and a half L. A. M. Batteries. Excluding Lewin's force, General Cobbe, who was placed in charge of the operation, had at his disposal 3,000 sabres, 15,400 rifles and 136 guns. This gave him a computed superiority of just over three to one over the enemy on the Tigris, a fairly normal superiority for this campaign. But if the 5th Division succeeded in coming up before the enemy had been completely disposed of, the proportion would drop to about two to one. It must also be remembered that the 17th and 18th Divisions were both new formations which had not been tried in war, and that they consisted largely of recruits. On the other hand, we possessed the great advantage (though this could not be known beforehand) that the Germans had withdrawn all their aeroplanes, artillery and transport. According to Larcher, this withdrawal took place between October 19th and 21st, just three days before the battle opened.

Hitherto the I Corps had been uniformly successful in its operations since the capture of Baghdad, but it had not attained the resounding successes achieved by Brooking at Ramadi and Khan Baghdadi, by Marshall at the crossing of the Adhaim, or by Egerton at Tuz. Far from being "destroyed," the Turk had on each occasion managed to escape with a comparatively whole skin. Now, if ever, was the time for General Cobbe to show that he also could "destroy" the enemy. Such was his intention. But he aimed high; although he started with

certain obvious advantages—numerical and material superiority, command of the air, armoured cars, etc.—the difficulties in front of him were considerable. The Turk had proved himself a wily and elusive foe, and the element of surprise was bound to be absent from the operation. The chief problem was therefore how to prevent the enemy " slipping away in the night." Then there was the usual difficulty of transport, accentuated in this case by the demands made upon our transport by the Persian adventure and also by the harvest on the lower Euphrates, which absorbed a lot of it. Finally there was the difficulty of the terrain : away from the river the ground was almost waterless, and the Jabals were a formidable obstacle ; if the enemy retired and destroyed the road on the west bank (an easy affair since it was a mountain road), progress would be rendered exceedingly difficult, for wheels could not move off the road, while the road on the east bank was commanded from the high ground on the west bank.

General Cobbe tackled the first of these difficulties, absence of surprise, by making a virtue of a necessity. It was necessary to establish a base depot for the operation in advance of Tikrit. Jift, ten miles south of Fat-ha, was selected, and two depots were openly formed, one on each bank. Thus no indication was given as to which bank would form the main line of advance. The possibility of an advance across the desert to the west was also fostered by hints and rumours imparted to the local Arabs. The transport difficulty was faced in the only possible way—namely, by cutting the coat according to the cloth. As to the terrain, though the Turkish position looked formidable it contained an element of weakness. A glance at map 9 will show that its left flank, instead of being sharply refused, an almost invariable Turkish precaution, was thrust forward. Cobbe decided to take full advantage of this weakness, and open the battle by turning the hostile left. This operation was rendered the easier by the omission of the Turks to hold the two passes that crossed the Jabal Hamrin, a bridle path at Darb-al-Khail and the Tikrit–Kirkuk road at Ain Nukhaila. There remained the difficulty of progress along the west bank if the enemy managed to destroy the road. This pointed to speed being sought for, once the operation had started, so that no time should be given for such destruction. Speed was also indicated if the operation was to be concluded before the 5th Division had time to intervene. Finally speed might enable the Fat-ha force to be destroyed before it could either effect its

escape or be reinforced from Humr. Altogether the problem was one of the most interesting that was encountered during the whole of the campaign, and it formed a fitting climax to the war in Mesopotamia.

General Cobbe's plan can now be sketched out. The first step was the formation of the depots at Jift. This was completed by October 18th, seven days' supplies and ammunition being stored there. The second step was to capture the east bank position. The task was allotted to the 53rd, 54th and 55th Brigades, assisted by the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which was to cross the Darb-al-Khail Pass and cut off the enemy's retreat. To enable this to be done it was first necessary to organise and develop the water supply on the passes. This was done at the last possible moment in order not to disclose the intended operation.

As soon as the force on the east bank was disposed of, the 17th Division (34th, 51st, 52nd Brigades) was to attack the main position on the west bank. Meanwhile the 11th Cavalry Brigade was to cross the Ain Nukhaila Pass and, making a wide sweep to the east, was to cross the Little Zab twenty-five miles above its confluence with the Tigris. Thereafter it was to co-operate in the attack on the Humr position. Cobbe also whispered to Cassels the possibility that he might ultimately be required to cut the line of the Tigris above Sharqat. The L.A.M.B. was to cross the desert to the west and cut the telegraph line near Sharqat, and generally to assist the cavalry approaching from the opposite bank in cutting off the enemy's retreat and harrying his rear. The cavalry and the L.A.M.B. were each allotted wireless sets* and were to be assisted by the Air Force. The plan may seem an ambitious one, but it was very carefully thought out, and judging from past experience should not prove impossible of fulfilment. The omens were favourable.

THE BATTLE.

By nightfall on October 23rd all the troops were in position for the battle (see Sketch Map 9). While the 55th, of the 18th Division, approached the Jabal Hamrin position in front, the 54th moved up to the Darb-al-Khail Pass ready to advance along the crest; in fact, it had already reached within six miles of the gorge by 7 p.m. To the north of the Jabal Hamrin the 7th Cavalry Brigade was in readiness to advance to the Tigris

* These sets worked badly.

at dawn and cut off the retreat of the Turks on the east bank. But when dawn broke on October 25th it was found that the Turks had slipped away in the night. The 7th Cavalry Brigade advanced to the river, but were too late to cut off more than a few stragglers. The Turks on the west bank conformed, and the 17th Division was able to occupy their position without firing a shot. Nevertheless the first stage in the battle had been a disappointment—and a surprise; for effective pursuit was for the time being impossible on the west bank as the Turks had done such extensive damage to the road that it was even impassable to pack transport. On the east bank the 7th Cavalry Brigade pushed right on to the Little Zab, but withdrew six miles for their night's bivouac. The head of the 18th Division joined them there.

OCTOBER 25TH.

The Turks were found to be holding their main position, Humr–Mushak–Ain Dibs, in strength. The road on the west bank was still in a bad state, communications were precarious, and it was not till dusk that the 17th Division received orders to press the attack on the position. The Highland Light Infantry, the leading battalion of the 51st, pushed boldly forward and captured a forward trench; the resistance was stiff and no further move was made that night.

On the east bank the 7th Cavalry Brigade crossed the Little Zab at Shumait and then swung to its left and captured or drove across the Tigris the few remaining Turks on the east bank. In the 18th Division the 55th had been left behind to repair the road, and the 53rd carried on the pursuit, crossing the Little Zab near its junction with the Tigris. It had orders thereafter to co-operate in the attack by the 51st on the main position; but, as we have seen, the 51st, through late receipt of orders, did not start attacking till dusk; the 54th halted for the night short of the Little Zab. Of the 17th Division, the 34th was in rear of the 51st, and all the transport of the 52nd had been utilised to form pack for the remainder of the force, and was therefore immobile. It acted as the general reserve; in fact, it was the sole general reserve.

North of the Little Zab the 7th Cavalry Brigade had come into contact with the 11th Cavalry Brigade, whose fortunes we must now follow. Crossing the Ain Nukhaila Pass at 2 a.m. on October 24th, and taking with it three days' rations, it had pushed forward at a rapid pace, led by its brigadier in person.

General Cassels was cut out for the task in hand, and his ardent spirit inspired his whole command with the requisite drive and dash. He reached Zarariya at 3 p.m. to find it occupied. But by skilful co-operation between the 7th Hussars, who turned the position by a ford lower downstream, and a section of "W" Battery, for whom an aeroplane spotted (a good example of the intelligent co-operation of the three arms), the Turks were driven off, though superior in numbers. They appeared to be a party *en route* to join the Tigris force from Kirkuk. The brigade bivouacked on the river that night,* and next morning (the 25th) moved down the river in order to co-operate with the 7th Cavalry Brigade in threatening the enemy's left flank. But on learning from General Norton, commanding the 7th Brigade, that no Turks remained on the east bank it returned to Zarariya.

Meanwhile Lewin's force had had an engagement with the enemy at Kirkuk, and was now pushing on towards Altun Köpri. Of the L.A.M.B. little was heard for some time. It had, however, succeeded in getting right round to Sharqat from the west, but had been chased away again by howitzer fire.

It had been a trying day for the gunners. On the east bank it was practically impossible to find positions under cover from the dominating heights on the opposite bank; on the west bank it was almost impossible to get along at all as progress off the road was out of the question. This tended to cause a drag on the whole proceedings.

OCTOBER 26TH.

The Turks were confidently expected to adopt their favourite tactics and slip away in the night. But for once they did not! Consequently the 17th Division was ordered to attack. The 51st proceeded to carry out this order, but met with no success, the failure being largely due to the inadequate support rendered by their artillery. For the reasons given above, the artillery cannot be blamed for this. The guns of the 18th Division did what they could to help from the opposite bank.

In order still further to assist the attack of the 17th Division, the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the 53rd were ordered to push forward up the Tigris bank. But owing to delay in constructing a bridge over the Little Zab, the order, as regards the 53rd, was cancelled. The 7th Brigade pushed forward, but presently the

* The ford was a difficult one; fourteen-horse teams were required to get the guns across.

Corps received the alarming and unexpected report that it had consumed all its rations for man and horse, including the emergency ration. This was partly explained by the fact that owing to the bad road there was delay in getting its ration convoy forward. But it should, despite the difficulties, have been possible to avoid the sudden immobilising of half the mounted troops of the whole force. As a matter of fact, they were not immobilised. That evening a convoy reached them with full rations for man and horse. But Cobbe appears to have accepted the first statement, which was clearly an exaggeration, without question, and cancelled the forward move of the brigade. Shortly afterwards it was ordered to retire to Fat-ha, where it was to go into Corps reserve. The setback met by the 17th Division was the cause of this move. Cobbe had no mobile reserve, no means by which he could directly support the 17th Division, and a cavalry brigade on the west bank might be useful in turning, or at least threatening, the enemy's right flank. This measure of precaution, however, tended to dislocate the whole plan, for the 11th Cavalry Brigade single-handed would scarcely be strong enough to cut off the Turks and at the same time hold off the oncoming 5th Division. Be that as it may, the 7th Cavalry Brigade began its retrograde march that night, and reached Fat-ha early next morning, after a twenty-mile march.

Lewin's force reported that it was held up short of Altun Köpri, and altogether things were not going too well. But from the north more encouraging news came trickling in. On the previous evening Cassels had received the orders that he had secretly anticipated—namely, to push right on, cross the Tigris thirteen miles north of Sharqat and, in conjunction with the L.A.M.B., cut off the enemy's retreat. Starting at dawn on the 26th, and marching rapidly, Cassels reached the Tigris at 1 p.m. A wide search for a ford resulted in one being found opposite Hadraniya.* General Cassels crossed this with his leading regiment, the Guides Cavalry. On the far bank was a Turkish hospital, and one of the doctors, a Greek, offered to show the general a good defensive position three miles to the south. As a matter of fact, Cassels had already spotted this position from the far bank; but, according to the account of an officer in the Guides Cavalry,† he popped the Greek doctor

* Before it was found a troop of the Guides Cavalry swam the river—a fine feat. (See Sketch Map 10.)

† *Cavalry Journal*, xiii, p. 121.

on a horse and together they galloped the three miles to the ridge in question. The British general agreed with the Greek doctor, who must have been a happy, if a sore, man for this hour of glorious life. The position ran through Huwaish and followed the line of a bluff on the north side of a nullah. Each squadron as it crossed had orders to gallop straight on to the position. Lastly came the left section of "W" Battery. Now the ford traversed four branches of the river,* the last being 200 yards wide and over four feet deep in places, and the current was swift. It was practically dark when the section started crossing, and a precarious crossing it was. The water went right over the tops of the gun shields. But the drivers, with their eight-horse teams, succeeded in getting all the four vehicles across, thereby earning the admiration of the whole brigade. There were no Turks on the far side, and next morning the remainder of the battery crossed.

Cassels had heard that the L.A.M.B. were in the neighbourhood, and the latter, who had succeeded in cutting the telegraph line—the only means of communication the enemy had with the outside world—had spotted the approach of the cavalry to the river. The 11th Cavalry Brigade had marched eighty-three miles in two days.

OCTOBER 27TH.

Cobbe's orders for this day were that the 17th Division should attack vigorously. But the Turks again did the unexpected—they slipped away in the night. The 17th Division followed up, but slowly, and at nightfall had only reached the line Balalij–Qalat-al-Bint (three miles north-west of Humr). It was still twenty-five miles from Cassels' force. The main interest of the day's proceedings is centred on that force. Cassels was, at the outset, in an optimistic frame of mind. He had not heard of the setback to the 17th Division, nor the withdrawal of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, and he purposed advancing south to approach the 17th Division. It is true he managed to join forces with the L.A.M.B., but his command was dangerously isolated and his situation soon became alarming. He was assailed on two sides, from the south and from the north. Sending "C" squadron of the 7th Hussars to hold off the northern foe, he boldly attacked the southern one with the 23rd Cavalry, assisted on the west flank by the L.A.M.B.

* Generally reported as only three. A shallower ford was afterwards found three miles farther north, but not much use was made of it.

After achieving his object of imposing upon the enemy and checking their advance, Cassels called off the attack, and devoted himself for the rest of the day to strengthening his position; for it was easy to foresee that he would ultimately have the whole Turkish force trying to force its way past him, quite apart from any danger threatening from the north. He, however, received the welcome intelligence that the 53rd was on its way to his assistance. The question was, would it arrive in time?

The 18th Division was now split up. The 55th had been withdrawn into corps reserve, and the 54th had been retained on the Little Zab in case the Turkish force at Altun Köpri should move down the Little Zab. This measure of precaution was hardly in keeping with the usual bold policy adopted by Cobbe. Lewin's force had been detached with the express purpose of detaining the Kirkuk Turks, and he was succeeding in his task; no attempt was made by the enemy to move down the Little Zab. On the other hand, the Force Commander was becoming dissatisfied by the slow and cautious progress of the 17th Division, and did his best to stir it into greater activity for the following day. He also reversed his intention of using the 7th Cavalry Brigade on the west bank, consequent on the retreat of the Turks, and ordered it to advance once more up the east bank, to the support of Cassels. Soon after midnight the brigade set out on its fifty-mile march to join its sister brigade. Sanders' 53rd Brigade, which had started off at 9 a.m. with the same destination, was also marching through the night with splendid determination and with the same destination. The Turks had meanwhile retired to a new position three miles south of Sharqat, and Cobbe ordered the 17th Division to advance during the night and attack it as early as possible the following morning. Even if it did so it would still be a day's march from Cassels' force, and there were indications that the 5th Division was at last marching south against Cassels' rear. The 28th looked like being an anxious and critical day for the 11th Cavalry Brigade.

OCTOBER 28TH. (*Sketch Map* 10.)

The night was quiet with Cassels' force, and dawn disclosed the presence of Sanders' force on the far side of the river, about four miles south of a ferry that had been formed. Cassels asked for the help of one battalion, and the 1st/7th Gurkhas were sent off, though it would be several hours before they

could arrive as the ferry only consisted of a raft and a small boat. The remaining two battalions faced the river, a procedure that seems rather an anti-climax after their splendid efforts to come to Cassels' assistance; they had marched thirty-three miles in twenty-one hours. There was practically no danger of the Turks breaking across the river.

Cassels had no information as to the approach of the 7th Cavalry Brigade or of the 17th Division; and the enemy had increased in numbers on his front. A considerable number of guns opened and hostile infantry began to advance. At the same time news came in that "C" Squadron, 7th Hussars, was being pushed back by the enemy, who were approaching from the north. The situation was an anxious one. Cassels had under 1,000 sabres and only six guns, but his action was typical of him. He decided to attack. The main body of the 7th Hussars, "A" and "D" Squadrons, was ordered to attack the enemy's left flank. Skilfully making use of the cover provided by the wadi, and well supported by "W," the cavalry swept down upon the unsuspecting Turks and drove them back for over a mile, penetrating to within 200 yards of some of their guns. But they could not maintain such an exposed position indefinitely, and managed to withdraw with a total loss of 70. Their resolute action, combined with that of the 23rd Cavalry on the previous day, misled the Turks into crediting us with at least two brigades.

The L.A.M.B. were doing their best to harry the Turkish left flank, though their commander had been captured, and on the right Sanders' guns came into action, but so far from the river that they could not descry the enemy and had to content themselves with ranging on to "W's" shell-bursts. Later they advanced to more effective range.

By noon the enemy were coming on again, threatening to turn our right, and the 7th Hussars had to be dangerously extended, and the 23rd Cavalry had to be sent to prolong their right. Eventually our line was over six miles long, forming the south-western arc of a huge circle. In the centre of the arc was "W" Battery, round which the whole battle seemed to pivot. Wherever an enemy appeared, there "W" put a shell.* If ever a British battery was well handled in the Great War, "W" was by Major MacIlwaine and his officers that day.

* The battery fired the enormous number of 1,500 rounds on the 28th. By dint of great exertions the 18th Division managed to keep the force well supplied with ammunition.

But the enemy continued to come on in greatly superior numbers, about 3,000 to the front and nearly that number round our right flank. By 2.30 they were within 300 yards of the 7th Hussars, who were asking for help. Still no news of the 7th Cavalry Brigade or of the 17th Division. But General Cassels still breathed a breezy optimism, and two things now happened to relieve the situation. The Turks opposite the 7th Hussars, instead of assaulting, began to swerve off to their left, and the leading troops of the 1st/7th Gurkhas began to arrive. Seldom can the ever-popular Gurkhas have been more welcomed by their British comrades than on this occasion. They relieved the Guides Cavalry, who went off to help the 7th Hussars. At 5 p.m. a further welcome reinforcement arrived in the shape of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, who had marched nearly fifty miles since 1 a.m., a splendid effort. They were used to extend the line to the north-west and north, relieving "C" Squadron, 7th Hussars, who had by this time been pushed back almost to the ford. "V" Battery remained for the night on the east bank. At 9 p.m., in response to Cassels' request for another battalion, the 1st/39th Garhwalis, who had just marched thirty-four miles in twenty-one and a half hours, began to cross.

The Turks continued their attacks far into the night, but everywhere the defence was firm. The only danger that seemed now possible was that the 5th Division might fall upon our northern flank before the 17th Division could come up. Cassels did not anticipate such an eventuality, and he asked Norton (who had been placed under his orders), after dealing with the enemy to the north, to swing round to the west and co-operate with the 11th Brigade next day.

We must now see how the 17th Division had been faring on this exciting and critical day. It will be remembered that Cobbe had forced it reluctantly into pursuing during the night, or rather early morning, for the advance did not commence till 3 a.m. Once again the advance was slow, and for the same reason—the difficult terrain. As a result the Division did not obtain contact till about noon, and communications were as bad as ever. At 1.30 the Royal West Kents delivered a brilliant headlong attack, without much support, which captured the enemy's position and sent him flying to the rear.

Owing to exhaustion the advance was not continued further, and the Division did not propose resuming it till next morning. But General Cobbe intervened in no uncertain fashion, pointing out that the supreme moment had arrived: the pressure on

Cassels' force must be relieved regardless of fatigue or casualties; exhausted men must be allowed if necessary to drop out. In the face of this stringent order, the advance was continued at 1.45 a.m. under the same difficult conditions that had been experienced on the previous days.

OCTOBER 29TH.

The night had been a disturbed one for Cassels' force. But the line had been preserved intact, and when it became light enough General Cassels could descry a large force about three miles to the south, but could not make out if they were British or Turks. If the former, the affair would seem to be "all over bar the shouting." But (there is always a "but" in war) a rather disturbing occurrence on the north side tended to alter the complexion of things. The Turks in this quarter had managed to push forward and secure a bluff commanding the vital ford, and only 3,000 yards from it. There they had established artillery, and when "V" Battery essayed to cross the ford it was shelled so heavily that the attempt could not be made. "V" accordingly came into action on the east side and soon succeeded in silencing the enemy. General Norton decided that the bluff must be captured, and he ordered the 13th Hussars, supported by "V" and all available machine guns, to gallop under the lee of the bluff and capture it by dismounted action. At 8.15 the regiment moved forward from near the ford at a gallop. It was in diamond formation, with the C.O. in the centre. It was greeted with a hot fire, and when still over 1,000 yards from the bluff the leading squadron commander was knocked out. Whether the regiment could actually have reached the bluff must ever remain problematical, for without waiting for any more casualties the leading squadron, deprived of its leader, swerved to its left and took cover under Cemetery Hill, a few hundred yards to its left. The remaining squadrons conformed, as they naturally would, and soon the whole regiment was collected under the shelter of Cemetery Hill, not having suffered any more casualties. This abortive mounted attack has been described in some detail because it brings out the important point that such a cavalry movement can only be controlled by an officer at its head. The same point was brought out, in contrary ways, by the charges of the 9th Lancers at Mons and at Moncel. But the regiment was burning to wipe out its failure to carry out its orders, and at 11.30 Colonel

Richardson begged permission to try again. "A"/337 had now crossed the ford and come into action in support of the 7th Brigade, and it was thought that the combined fire of it and "V" should suffice to cover the attack. At 1.20 accordingly the attack was launched, after an intensive bombardment by the two batteries, which fired at a maximum rate of gunfire, and with beautiful accuracy. The regiment swept out from under Cemetery Hill in two lines, the C.O. this time in the lead himself. Onlookers were astonished at the precision of the lines; it might have been a charge across the Long Valley. Straight for the bluff the regiment galloped, greeted as before with a heavy machine-gun fire. Suddenly the charge was checked by an unexpected ravine, but presently the Colonel could be seen threading his way across it, closely followed by the remainder, and the movement was continued without a single casualty right to the foot of the bluff, which was in dead ground. Here the men dismounted, fixed bayonets and, still led by their colonel, rapidly climbed the steep face of the bluff, about 150 feet in height. Colonel Richardson was the first to reach the top. The Turks were already beginning to take to their heels, thoroughly shaken by the admirable barrage, which lifted at the last moment and allowed the regiment to go in with the bayonet and finish off the defenders. A sharp hand-to-hand fight ensued, the upshot of which was that the whole number of the occupants surrendered, 730 in all. A squadron of the 14th Lancers, which had been waiting for the moment, galloped after the fugitives and captured 260 of them, thus practically accounting for the whole force.

This striking success removed all danger from the north, and, "V" having crossed the ford, Norton was able to swing his brigade round facing south, in order to co-operate with Cassels' infantry (the 11th Brigade being by now all in reserve). Cassels' main concern now was to prevent the Turks breaking out of the net that was forming round them, to the west. He had ascertained from the air that the bodies he could see to the south were Turks, and the Air also reported that the 17th Division was only a short way further to the south. Though this Division was still invisible, news was received that it would attack at 3.30 p.m. At that hour, therefore, Cassels' and Sanders' guns joined in the general bombardment, but when darkness came there was still no sign of the Division nor information of the result of its attack. Sanders had however sent over one of his two remaining battalions, and Cassels ordered his whole force to engage the

enemy actively throughout the night, having previously instructed the L.A.M.B. to close all exit to the west.

* * * * *

It is now time to see how the 17th Division was faring. At 7 a.m. its Divisional cavalry had come up with the Turks in a hastily prepared position five miles north of Sharqat. The progress of the infantry and artillery was again painfully slow, but by noon the infantry were close up to the position, which was held by a slightly greater force—about 4,000 Turks—than the Division was able to bring against it. At 4 p.m. the attack was launched, over difficult ground. As the bombardment ceased and the infantry approached the trenches, 1,000 Turks suddenly issued from them and a confused fight ensued. The upshot was that, though the Division obtained a lodgment in the position, it did not succeed in ejecting the enemy completely from it.

During the course of the day the communications of the Division had gone from bad to worse, as had also the staff work. When eventually, at 7 p.m., the Corps got through by phone, it was informed that all the field artillery ammunition was expended. The Corps, alarmed, suggested that if that were so it would be inadvisable to attack at dawn. (It afterwards transpired that there were still over 1,000 rounds in hand.) The Corps then set about hastening the ammunition and discovering how this contretemps had arisen. It elicited the surprising fact that the ammunition columns were practically full, but that no message to fill up had reached them. It was then too late to rectify the situation till the following afternoon, and in the meantime Cobbe instructed the Division to extend its line to the north-west during the night, in order to close that avenue of escape to the enemy.

OCTOBER 30TH.

Soon after daylight General Cobbe advanced northwards with his whole force, in order to clinch the affair. But the affair was already clinched. The Turk had shot his bolt; for six days he had been harried from pillar to post, and allowed scarcely any rest. Though he had conducted his series of retirements with all his well-known skill he had reached the end of his tether, and at the break of day white flags were seen to go up all along the line. The battle—and the war—was over. The cavalry rapidly pursued what fugitives there were towards Mosul, frequently getting among them with the sabre.

When twelve miles south of Mosul on November 1st, news arrived that an armistice had been signed on the previous day, and operations came to an end.

In the course of the operations we had captured 11,321 prisoners and 51 guns, at a cost of 1,886 casualties. Thus at the last moment of the war we gained what Sir Arnold Wilson describes as " a success that deserves immortality."

It transpired that the orders received by Hakki Bey, the Turkish commander, had been to retire gradually. Things went more or less according to plan until we cut his communications. As a result he was not able to communicate with the 5th Division which was coming south to his help. The activity of Cassels' force succeeded in holding up this division, but Hakki Bey could hear the sound of the engagement and guessed that it was the 5th Division. He continued therefore to draw away to the north to join up with it, instead of breaking out to the west, as had been his original intention. He thus played unwittingly into our hands.

Comments on the operations will be given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

Final Comments.

SHARQAT.

IN reviewing the operations as a whole, the first thing that strikes one is the high standard of soldiership displayed on both sides, considering that the one side was on its last legs and the other side knew that final victory was inevitable and close.

The Turks were short of men and material. In the course of the battle they were blind (no air force, cavalry or armoured cars), deaf (no communications from the outside world) and dumb (no means of communicating their plight to anyone). Yet they fought an obviously losing fight with courage and skill right up to the end.

The British-Indian force showed remarkable vigour and intensity of purpose in that last advance, in striking contrast to the somewhat flabby final advance on the Western Front after the final battle of Ors-Catillon.

The cavalry showed that it only required inspired leadership and suitable terrain in order to justify itself and produce decisive results. The L.A.M.B. did all that was asked of them, and by cutting the telegraph in the enemy's rear made a big contribution to the victory. The artillery encountered exceptional difficulties, owing to lack of roads, covered positions, water (one battery went for sixty hours without water) and communications. Yet it acquitted itself well. The work in particular of " V " and " W " Batteries will afford a shining example to young Horse Artillerymen for all time.

The infantry performed magnificent and unexpected feats of marching when going to the help of Cassels' force. They had an impelling motive—to succour their comrades—and they showed the same determined drive as Havelock's men had shown when marching to the succour of their comrades in Lucknow. All of which shows how the spirit dominates the body, and how it can be made to

" Force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone."

Troops frequently appear to be dead beat and incapable of further effort, yet when the right stimulus is applied they seem to receive a new and unexpected lease of life and strength. In fact, it is strictly impossible to say under any circumstances that the troops are "dead beat." Such simple things as a drum and a penny whistle can revive them.

Co-operation between the various arms—always a difficult matter—was rendered unusually so by the breakdown of communications. But this gave an opening for local initiative, for marching to the sound of the guns, for joining in a bombardment without orders, for helping neighbours with ammunition, and for keeping in touch with neighbours by visual signalling, which here came into its own and was much used by the 18th (though not by the 17th) Division. On the other hand, there was no compensation for the "time lag" in orders which was markedly in evidence. It would perhaps be sound always to assume a greater time lag in orders than one expects.

This next paragraph might well be labelled "safety first." Sir Alexander Cobbe showed greater courage than most commanders in practically dispensing with a general reserve when attacking. It is true that he improvised one in the course of the battle (the 55th Brigade); but it was never used. In fact, for any influence they had on the battle the 52nd and 55th Brigades, as fighting entities, might never have existed. It is also notable that not one of the precautionary measures taken (though all seemed perfectly justifiable) proved in the event to be necessary—the retention of 55th at Fat-ha, the recall of 7th Cavalry Brigade to Fat-ha (involving an extra forty miles of marching), the retention of the 54th at the Little Zab till the 29th; the retention of Sanders' main body on the east bank on the 28th and 29th. The 52nd was also wasted through failure to envisage the possibility of the Turks destroying the roads so thoroughly. The ground was known to be rough and difficult, and more attention might have been paid to this possibility in advance. "In counsel," says wise old Bacon, "it is good to see dangers and in execution not to see them except they be very great." Alternatively, when it was discovered that the Turks had evacuated the east bank, could not the whole plan have been drastically recast? Could not the whole of the 18th Division have crossed the Tigris near Sharqat?

In the light of events such a course seems feasible, as Sharqat was not, contrary to expectations, held by the enemy. But it would have required exceptional flexibility of conception and

power of rapid adaptation to achieve it. By the afternoon of the 24th it was known that the Little Zab was practically undefended. If the new plan had been made that evening the 52nd need not have been immobilised, and it might have supported the 18th Division. By concentrating all available administrative services on the east bank could such a force have been maintained?

The student should find the examination of this question profitable. Tactically it certainly was feasible. Hakki Bey had orders to hold on to the Humr position till the 31st. A situation might have developed similar to that in February when the Turks doggedly held on to their Sannaiyet position on the left bank while Maude was crossing to that bank in their rear. The difference lay in the quality of the cavalry leadership, and in the fact that Maude "cribbed, cabined and confined" his cavalry, whilst Cobbe gave them a free hand. It is noteworthy that Marshall equally gave Cobbe a free hand and did not interfere in the direction of the battle.

Perhaps too much was expected of the 17th Division. It was new, and its staff was new, and its difficulties were exceptional and might have been foreseen to a greater extent by the Corps staff. Also a force commander in the rear cannot drive the troops in front, however ardent he may be, any more than a cavalry leader can control a charge whilst it is in motion unless he is actually leading it. Even of old this was so. Marlborough might charge into the thick of the fray at Ramillies, but only a fraction of his army were aware of the fact. It might help to increase his prestige in *future* battle, but could have little effect upon the battle in hand. It should also be remembered that the bulk of our troops were Indians. If these are not previously inspired by their leader (such as Cassels' Indians were) the leader cannot impart this spirit to the men who set the pace (namely, the men in the front line) in the middle of a battle. All he can do is to "apply ginger" to the subordinate commanders, and this Cobbe did not fail to do.

Finally, mere manœuvre, however skilfully carried out, cannot expect to achieve a bloodless victory. Right up to the end hard knocks must be expected and must be given. Up to the last the cavalry showed that they were prepared to risk all—the 23rd Cavalry on the 27th, the 7th Hussars on the 28th, the 13th Hussars on the 29th. "Hard pounding this, gentlemen," said Wellington at Waterloo. "We'll see who will pound the longest." Cassels pounded the longest, and to Cassels was the victory principally due.

FINAL COMMENTS.

It is outside the scope of this book to discuss the broad strategy of the whole campaign in Mesopotamia from its inception, or to examine whether the maintenance in that theatre of an army which ended up with a ration strength of 420,000 was justified or not. But it may be profitable to gather up the threads of that portion of the campaign dealt with in the foregoing pages, and see what general lessons can be learnt from it.

Perhaps the most universal and striking lesson comes under the heading of " Safety First." The student who casts his eye back over the events of the period will probably agree that on practically every occasion when measures of " safety first " were adopted complete success slipped from our grasp, whereas when our commanders " put fortune to the test " and took risks they reaped a rich reward. Here General Wolfe is our sure guide.

As a result of his experiences at the siege of Louisburg he wrote in words that might well be written in letters of gold on the portals of all military schools : " Experience shows me that pushing on smartly is the road to success ; that nothing is to be reckoned an obstacle to an undertaking which is not found to be so on trial ; that *in war something must be allowed to chance and fortune*, seeing that it is in its nature hazardous and an option of difficulties ; that the greatness of an object should come under consideration as opposed to the impediments that lie in the way ; that the honour of one's country is to have some weight, and that in particular circumstances and times the loss of a thousand men is rather an advantage than otherwise, seeing that gallant attempts save its reputation and make it respected, whereas the contrary appearances sink the credit of the country, ruin the troops, and create infinite uneasiness and discontent at home." Nelson said much the same thing in rather fewer words : " Something must be left to chance." Possibly he had read and imbibed Wolfe's words.

In this connection an analysis of the relation of the percentage of troops in reserve or unemployed to the extent of the success gained in the battles of the campaign produces some pointed results. We will take first those battles in which the object aimed at—generally the " destruction " of the hostile force—was not completely achieved. The percentage of infantry battalions that played an effective part in such battles is roughly as follows :—

Battle.	*Percentage.*
Jabal Hamrin	75
Duqma	40
Khalis Canal	55
*Istabulat (first day)	55
*Istabulat (second day)	55
Adhaim	70
Daur	25
Tikrit	40

If we now examine those battles in which the commander's aim was fully attained we shall find a very different set of figures. At the crossing of the Adhaim, Marshall kept no reserve, and the whole of his force was either employed or on the point of being employed when the enemy broke and fled. Ramadi and Khan Baghdadi were both 100 per cent. victories, and at both battles 100 per cent. of Brooking's forces were employed. At Tuz the figure comes out at about 75 per cent. Sharqat is for various reasons more difficult to assess, but at least it may be said that Cobbe dispensed with a general reserve at the outset, and that in the course of the battle all his troops were in one way or another employed. Thus we seem to get the broad conclusion that the extent of the success was in inverse proportion to the size of the reserve.

But, it may be objected, such a reserve is essential in order to guard against a hostile counter-attack. That may be so, but it is significant that on the only three occasions when the Turks did counter-attack—Jabal Hamrin, Istabulat second day, and Adhaim—the reserves were not up in time to effect much. The moral seems to be that if you keep back reserves as an insurance against counter-attack they must be so close up, and in such close touch with the situation in front that they can be applied in time to be effective. It should also be noted that the other reason for holding reserves in an attack—namely, to exploit a success gained—usual on the Western Front—did not apply here, for the object was *not* to gain ground but to destroy the enemy. In such circumstances the "White Knight" principle of frittering away your resources in the effort to guard against every danger, however improbable, seems unsound.

Secondly, we cannot fail to be struck by the influence of good leadership on the success of our arms. As Colonel F. N. Maude said: "It is the soul of the leader that counts—the rest matters very little." We were fortunate in our leaders in this campaign;

* In reality two distinct battles.

with commanders of the calibre of Maude and Marshall, and lieutenants like Cobbe, Brooking and Cassels, we could hardly fail to win.

Thirdly, we come to a more debatable point. Did we pamper our troops? Anyone who did not serve through the campaign after Baghdad, but who goes through the extensive collection of photographs in the Imperial War Museum, must surely be struck by the great disparity between the clothing, equipment and general well-being of our troops and of the Turks—a disparity that was not reflected to the same degree on the battle-field. It is an uncomfortable reflection that, in spite of our enormous resources we were not noticeably, and as a whole, more mobile than our opponents. It is somewhat paradoxical that the very accumulation of transport and supplies, designed to ensure mobility, tended to complicate the question—more horses to water and feed; greater congestion and wear and tear on the roads, larger staffs required to administer the force, more links in the chain—any one of which might break. How our elder officers must have pined for the beautiful simplicity of the Boer forces in the South African War.

Fourthly, we get many examples of the impact of interior and exterior lines, and we find that in practically every case the possessor of interior lines has the advantage provided he has sufficient time and space to manœuvre.

Finally, let us not be too proud to learn a lesson or two from our tough opponents. It is unfortunate that the Turks have left so few records of a war of which they have no reason to be ashamed, for us to study. Still, we know from the point of view of "the target end" how unpleasantly effective their methods could be at times. In particular we should study their methods of fighting rearguard actions and try to devise some counter to their practice of "slipping away in the night." More practice at night operations seems to be the answer. The average British soldier is town-bred, and is apt to become lost at night when the street lamp goes out. As students of the campaign we may be glad that we had opposed to us a general of the calibre of Ali Ihsan, a foe worthy of Maude's steel; for a campaign which is so replete with interest and instruction might otherwise have been merely a dull record of placid advances and easy successes by our arms. Instead of which we can look back upon the campaign with pleasure and pride, and generations to come may profit by the study of Maude's and Marshall's methods and of the achievements of their gallant troops.

APPENDIX

ORDER OF BATTLE, TIGRIS FRONT.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

CAVALRY DIVISION.

6th Cavalry Brigade.

14th Hussars.
21st Cavalry.
22nd Cavalry.
15th Machine Gun Squadron.
No. 2 Field Troop, 2nd Sappers and Miners.
6th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

7th Cavalry Brigade.

13th Hussars.
13th Lancers.
14th Lancers.
16th Machine Gun Squadron.
7th Cavalry Brigade Field Troop, R.E.
7th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Divisional Troops.

Headquarters, Cavalry Divisional Artillery.
"S" and "V" Batteries, R.H.A.
Cavalry Divisional Signal Squadron.
Three pack stations, 1st (Australia and New Zealand) Wireless Signal Squadron.
Cavalry Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 119 and 131 Cavalry Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 30 Sanitary Section.
Nos. 4 and 5 Mobile Veterinary Sections.

11th Cavalry Brigade.

7th Hussars.
23rd Cavalry.
Guides Cavalry.
25th Machine Gun Squadron.
"W" Battery, R.H.A.
No. 5 Field Troop, 1st Sappers and Miners.
11th Cavalry Brigade Signal Troop.
11th Cavalry Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
No. 152 Cavalry Combined Field Ambulance.
No. 8 Mobile Veterinary Section.

I CORPS.

3RD DIVISION.

7th Infantry Brigade.

1st Connaught Rangers.
27th Punjabis.
91st Punjabis.
2/7th Gurkhas.
No. 131 Machine Gun Company.
7th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

8th Infantry Brigade.

1st Manchester Regiment.
47th Sikhs.
59th Rifles.
2/124th Baluchistan Infantry.
No. 132 Machine Gun Company.
8th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

9th Infantry Brigade.

2nd Dorsetshire Regiment.
93rd Infantry.
105th Mahrattas.
1/1st Gurkhas.
No. 133 Machine Gun Company.
9th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.

4th Brigade, R.F.A. (7th, 14th, 66th and " B "/69th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
8th Brigade, R.F.A. (372nd, 373rd, 374th and 72nd Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

18th, 20th and 21st Companies, 3rd Sappers and Miners.
1/34th Sikh Pioneers.

3rd Divisional Signal Company.
No. 271 Machine Gun Company.
3rd Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 110, 111, 112 and 113 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 11 Sanitary Section.
No. 3 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Attached.

" A," " B " and " C " Light Trench Mortar Batteries.*

7TH DIVISION.

19th Infantry Brigade.

1st Seaforth Highlanders.
28th Punjabis.
92nd Punjabis.
125th Rifles.
No. 135 Machine Gun Company.
19th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

* Each consisted of four 3-inch Stokes mortars.

21st Infantry Brigade.

2nd Black Watch.
1st Guides Infantry.
20th Punjabis.
1/8th Gurkhas.
No. 134 Machine Gun Company.
21st Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

28th Infantry Brigade.

2nd Leicestershire Regiment.
51st Sikhs.
53rd Sikhs.
56th Rifles.
No. 136 Machine Gun Company.
28th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.

9th Brigade, R.F.A. (19th, 20th, 28th and " D "/69th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
56th Brigade, R.F.A. (" A," " B," " C " and 527th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

1st, 3rd and 4th Companies, 1st Sappers and Miners.
121st Pioneers.

7th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 272 Machine Gun Company.
7th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 127, 128, 129 and 130 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 12 Sanitary Section.
No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Attached.

" D," " E " and " F " Light Trench Mortar Batteries.

Corps Troops (I Corps).

32nd Lancers.
I Corps Heavy Artillery Brigade (60-pdr. guns) (2/86th and 157th Heavy Batteries, R.G.A.). Total, 8 guns.
I Corps Siege Artillery Brigade (6-in. howitzers) (159th, 246th and 257th Siege Batteries, R.G.A.). Total, 12 guns.
Nos. 788, 789, 901 and 902 Mechanical Transport Companies. (Caterpillar Tractors.)
Nos. 133, 134 and 135 Medium Trench Mortar Batteries.†
I Corps Signal Company.
No. 1 Printing Section.
No. 1 Lithograph Section.

Attached :—

Nos. 59 and 93 Anti-Aircraft Sections.
No. 2 Mobile Bridging Train and detachment No. 3 Bridging Train.
One section Field Searchlight Company.
One wagon station, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
No. 40 Motor Ambulance Convoy.

* Each consisted of four 3-inch Stokes mortars.

† Each consisted of four 2-inch trench mortars.

III CORPS.

13TH DIVISION.

38th Infantry Brigade.

6th King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster).
6th East Lancashire Regiment.
6th Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire).
6th Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).
No. 38 Machine Gun Company.
38th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

39th Infantry Brigade.

9th Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
7th Gloucestershire Regiment.
9th Worcestershire Regiment.
7th North Staffordshire Regiment.
No. 39 Machine Gun Company.
39th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

40th Infantry Brigade.

8th Cheshire Regiment.
8th Royal Welch Fusiliers.
4th South Wales Borderers.
5th Wiltshire Regiment.
No. 40 Machine Gun Company.
40th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

13th Divisional Cyclist Company.

Artillery.

55th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and 60th Batteries*). **Total,** 24 guns.
66th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and 61st Batteries*). **Total,** 24 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

71st, 72nd and 88th Field Companies, R.E.
8th Welch Pioneers.

13th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 273 Machine Gun Company.
13th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
10th Field Bakery.
31st Field Butchery.
Nos. 39, 40 and 41 British Field Ambulances.
No. 28 Sanitary Section.
No. 24 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Attached.

"G," "H," and "I" Light Trench Mortar Batteries.

14TH DIVISION.

35th Infantry Brigade.

1/5th Buffs.
37th Dogras.
102nd Grenadiers.
2/4th Gurkhas.
No. 185 Machine Gun Company.
35th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

* *Note.*—The 60th and 61st Batteries were each equipped with six howitzers instead of the normal four in a howitzer battery.

36th Infantry Brigade.

1/4th Hampshire Regiment.
26th Punjabis.
62nd Punjabis.
82nd Punjabis.
No. 186 Machine Gun Company.
36th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

37th Infantry Brigade.

2nd Norfolk Regiment.
1/67th Punjabis.
1/2nd Gurkhas.
2/9th Gurkhas.
No. 187 Machine Gun Company.
37th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.

13th Brigade, R.F.A. (2nd, 8th, 44th and " C "/69th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
30th Brigade, R.F.A. (384th, 385th, 386th and " A "/69th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

12th, 13th and 15th Companies, 2nd Sappers and Miners.
128th Pioneers.

14th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 274 Machine Gun Company.
14th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 20, 21, 22 and 135 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 13 Sanitary Section.
No. 1 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Attached.

" J," " K," " L " Light Trench Mortar Batteries.

Corps Troops (III Corps).

12th Cavalry.
III Corps Heavy Artillery Brigade (60-pdr. guns) (2/104th and 177th Heavy Batteries, R.G.A.). Total, 8 guns.
III Corps Siege Artillery Brigade (6-in. howitzers) (269th, 384th and 387th Siege Batteries, R.G.A.). Total, 12 guns.
Nos. 903, 967, 968, 969 Mechanical Transport Companies. (Caterpillar Tractors.)
Nos. 136, 137, 138 Medium Trench Mortar Batteries.
III Corps Signal Company.
No. 2. Printing Section.
No. 2 Lithograph Section.

Attached :—

One section, 26th Mountain Battery (2 guns).
Nos. 80 and 92 Anti-Aircraft Sections.
No. 1 Mobile Bridging Train (less detachments).
Half section, Field Searchlight Company.
Two pack stations, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
Convalescent Depot: No. 20 British Field Ambulance and three sections, No. 1 Indian Field Ambulance.
No. 39 Motor Ambulance Convoy.

15TH DIVISION.

12th Infantry Brigade.

1/5th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).
2/39th Garhwal Rifles.
1/43rd Erinpura Regiment.
90th Punjabis.
No. 128 Machine Gun Company.
12th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

42nd Infantry Brigade.

1/4th Dorsetshire Regiment.
1/5th Gurkhas.
2/5th Gurkhas.
2/6th Gurkhas.
No. 130 Machine Gun Company.
42nd Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

50th Infantry Brigade.

1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.
6th Jats.
24th Punjabis.
1/97th Infantry.
No. 256 Machine Gun Company.
50th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
" D " Squadron, 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

Artillery.

215th Brigade, R.F.A. (1086th, 1088th, 2/1st Notts, 524th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
222nd Brigade R.F.A. (1075th, 1070th, 1072nd, 77th Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

448th, 450th and 451st Field Companies, R.E.
48th Pioneers.

15th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 275 Machine Gun Company.
15th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 23, 34, 105 and 108 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 16 Sanitary Section.
No. 6 Mobile Veterinary Section.

Attached.

One squadron, 10th Lancers.
No. 118 Anti-Aircraft Section.
Detachment, No. 1 Mobile Bridging Train.
Half Section, Field Searchlight Company.
Two pack stations, 1st Wireless Signal Squadron.
" M," " N," " O," Light Trench Mortar Batteries.

17TH DIVISION.

34th Infantry Brigade.

2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.
31st Punjabis.
1/112th Infantry.
114th Mahrattas.
No. 129 Machine Gun Company.
34th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

51st Infantry Brigade.

1st Highland Light Infantry.
1/2nd Rajputs.
14th Sikhs.
1/10th Gurkhas.
No. 257 Machine Gun Company.
51st Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

52nd Infantry Brigade.

1/6th Hampshire Regiment.
45th Sikhs.
84th Punjabis.
1/113th Infantry.
No. 258 Machine Gun Company.
52nd Brigade Supply and Transport Company.
One squadron, 10th Lancers.

Artillery.

220th Brigade, R.F.A. (1064th, 1066th Batteries). Total, 12 guns.
221st Brigade, R.F.A. (1067th, 1068th Batteries). Total, 12 guns.
Three small arm ammunition sections.

Engineers and Pioneers.

Sirmur Sapper and Miner Company.
Malerkotla Sapper and Miner Company.
Tehri-Garhwal Sapper and Miner Company.
1/32nd Sikh Pioneers.

17th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 276 Machine Gun Company.
Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 3, 19, 35 and 36 Combined Field Ambulances.
No. 1 Sanitary Section.
No. 7 Mobile Veterinary Section.

18TH DIVISION.

53rd Infantry Brigade.

1/9th Middlesex Regiment.
1/89th Punjabis.
1/3rd Gurkhas.
1/7th Gurkhas (temporarily attached to 15th Division).
No. 207 Machine Gun Company.
53rd Light Trench Mortar Battery.
53rd Small Arm Ammunition Section.
53rd Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Attached :—

Two sections, Field Searchlight Company.
One squadron, Patiala Lancers.
Two squadrons, 10th Lancers.
One section, 14th Light Armoured Motor Battery.
5th and 8th Companies, Sappers and Miners.
No. 37 Combined Field Ambulance.

54th Infantry Brigade.

1/5th Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.
25th Punjabis.
1/39th Garhwalis.
52nd Sikhs.
No. 238 Machine Gun Company.
54th Light Trench Mortar Battery.
54th Small Arm Ammunition Section.
54th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

55th Infantry Brigade.

1/5th East Surrey Regiment.
1/10th Jats.
1/94th Infantry.
116th Mahrattas.
No. 239 Machine Gun Company.
55th Light Trench Mortar Battery.
55th Small Arm Ammunition Section.
55th Brigade Supply and Transport Company.

Artillery.

336th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A" "B," "C," and "D" Batteries). Total, 22 guns.
337th Brigade, R.F.A. ("A," "B," "C" and 341st Batteries). Total, 22 guns.

Engineers and Pioneers.

2nd Field Company, Sappers and Miners.
106th Pioneers (less two companies).

18th Divisional Signal Company.
No. 249 Machine Gun Company.
18th Divisional Troops Supply and Transport Company.
Nos. 38, 39 and 40 Combined Field Ambulances.
No 22 Sanitary Section.
No. 12 Mobile Veterinary Section.

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30th Squadron.
63rd Squadron.

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